DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 414 617 EA 028 787

TITLE	Handbook for Public Participation in Education.
INSTITUTION	North Carolina State Dept. of Public Instruction, Raleigh.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	124p.; Product of North Carolina School Improvement Panel.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Standards; Accountability; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; Performance; *Public Schools; *State Legislation; *State Standards; Strategic Planning
IDENTIFIERS	*North Carolina

ABSTRACT

The North Carolina School Improvement Panel was created in August 1995 to frame a single plan for improving public education in North Carolina by pulling together the four major reform initiatives already under way in the state. The resulting plan, as presented to the State Board of Education in 1997, has four priorities: high student performance; safe and orderly schools; quality teachers, administrators, and staff; and effective and efficient operation. This handbook is designed to help forge a common understanding and build a sense of urgency about improving public education in North Carolina. Chapter 1 examines the changing social and economic context and explains why change in the state's educational system is necessary. Chapter 2 describes negative perceptions about public schools and chapter 3 offers reasons for continuing to support public schools. Chapters 4 through 11 provide information about the School Improvement Panel, the ABCs Plus legislation (North Carolina's Strategic Plan for Excellent Schools), the New ABCs of Public Education, new state standards, the "JobReady" initiative, the Excellent Schools Act, school-based management in the state, and work of the School Improvement Panel. Plans for public engagement and community building are outlined in the 12th chapter. Appendices list additional programs, resources, and School Improvement grants, and provide information about educational improvement and the state's Total Quality Education program. (Contains nine references). (LMI)

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Handbook for Public Participation in Education

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North Carolina School Improvement Panel
Revised 1997

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Public Schools of North Carolina

State Board of Education
Jay Robinson, Chairman

http://www.dpi.state.nc.us

Department of Public Instruction
Michael E. Ward, State Superintendent

Dear Partners,

Our partnerships are more important than ever as we gain momentum in our quest for better schools in North Carolina. The New ABCs of Public Education, which has completed one full year at the elementary and middle school levels and is being implemented at the high school level this year, is commanding a much-needed focus at the local school level. The program's success exemplifies what can happen when the Governor's Office, legislators, the State Board of Education, teachers, administrators and parents from across this state come together in their efforts to make our schools better for children.

The Excellent Schools Act, initiated by Gov. Hunt for the 1997-98 year, makes North Carolina the first state in the country to take a comprehensive approach to tying higher teacher pay to high standards. I believe our state can be the first in excellence in many ways as we continue to build critical partnerships in our work.

That work was given a further boost in momentum earlier this year when the State Board of Education adopted The ABCs Plus: North Carolina's Strategic Plan for Excellent Schools, a coordinated effort to bring all the initiatives together in a plan of work that will specify priorities, goals, and measures for continual improvement in North Carolina.

Our partnerships are the key to making sure each success builds on the next one toward our goal of school improvement. Essential to this process is public understanding on the issues and gaining informed, constructive input on those issues. You are an essential link in continuing the process of public discussions and I think you will find the information in the School Improvement Panel's Handbook helpful in doing so.

The School Improvement Panel's work is to bring our state's many initiatives together under one, coherent plan utilizing our communities' vast resources as the force behind these initiatives. In short, you are the force behind these initiatives. Thank you for enlisting with us in this partnership.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Ward

Mike Ward

An Open Letter from Lowell Thomas
Chairman of the North Carolina School Improvement Panel

Dear Friend of Public Education:

We are on the brink of a bold and exciting new era of public education in North Carolina. By reading and acting on the information in this handbook, you will be sharing in the vision of a public education system that makes North Carolina the envy of the nation. But more importantly, you will be helping to put the "public" back into public education, an essential ingredient in turning this vision of educational excellence into reality.

The North Carolina School Improvement Panel was created to frame a single plan for improving public education in North Carolina by pulling together the four major reform initiatives already underway in the state. The resulting plan, as presented to the State Board of Education in 1997, has four priorities. They are:

- High student performance;
- Safe and orderly schools;
- Quality teachers, administrators, and staff; and
- Effective and efficient operation.

Meeting these priorities will require unprecedented levels of public involvement by parents, educators, business leaders and the public at large in communities across the state. To reach such levels of public involvement, the Panel is carrying out a bold plan to open and sustain channels of communication between the public and the public schools.

Stripped of jargon and boiled down into language easily grasped by all, this handbook is designed to help forge a common understanding and build a sense of urgency about improving public education in North Carolina. A common awareness is emerging as the public discovers, weighs, and embraces the chance to promote educational excellence in North Carolina.

Welcome aboard.

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Acknowledgments

Some of the past efforts to improve public education in North Carolina might have withered because they were based only on perceptions and anecdotes about what the public schools needed and what the public wanted without any objective, quantitative research and analysis to support those impressions, an understanding of public opinion or the will to engage the public as partners in reform.

Mindful of this history, the North Carolina School Improvement Panel has taken a different approach since its creation in August 1995. Rather than reinvent the wheel, the Panel has drawn on existing studies both for information on what public education should look like in North Carolina and for insights into what the public wants from its schools.

The result is a plan to inform and engage the public that is based on the best of the sound, scientific research available or pending at this moment. In its plan and in this book, the Panel has pulled together information into a concise, readable format for both the seasoned educator and the public at large.

Many people outside of the Panel were instrumental in making this happen.

First, the Panel wishes to thank Gov. James B. Hunt Jr., for the invaluable assistance of his office and the insight of his education advisors.

Reports, opinion polls, statistics and anecdotal evidence provided by various offices of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction have been essential, and the Panel would like to thank many in the department for their cooperation.

For information and recommendations about ongoing educational reform efforts in North Carolina, the Panel is indebted to The Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness and its JobReady Partnership Council, directed by Sandy Babb; and the North Carolina Education Standards & Accountability Commission, directed by Dr. Sam Houston.

For support from the business community, the Panel singles out for thanks the North Carolina Business Committee for Education, North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry, and North Carolina Partners for Education.

For a sense of the pulse of North Carolinians concerned about their public schools, the Panel is grateful for the educators, business leaders and others who were either surveyed or were participants in a series of focus groups held across the state.

For general information on public feelings about education, the Panel culled mostly from national sources. The most fruitful of these were "First Things First: What Americans Expect from the Public Schools," "Assignment Incomplete: The Unfinished Business of Education Reform" and "Given the Circumstances: Teachers Talk About Public Education Today," reports by Public Agenda, a non-profit, non-partisan, public opinion research and education organization based in New York; "Is There a Public for Public Schools?" a book by David Matthews, president of the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio; and "Do We Still Need Public Schools?" a book by the Center for National Education Policy and Phi Delta Kappa, a professional educators association long active in ways to restore public confidence in public education.

For technical assistance, the Panel wishes to thank the North Carolina Office of Education Reform, directed by Judy White.

Finally, the Panel is grateful to Dr. Jay Robinson, chairman of the State Board of Education, and board members, without whose complete support this endeavor would not have been possible.

September 1997

I.
THE WORLD OUR STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS FACE

Chapter One
The World Our Students, Teachers and Schools Face

A Changing World Demands We Change Our Public Schools

The first step in improving public education in North Carolina is to examine why it is necessary to change the way we have been educating our students for generations.

The purpose of public education is to prepare young people for the civic responsibilities of adulthood and for the demands of the workplace. But the world and the workplace that today's students will inherit upon graduation are much different from the one that adults face today.

While we cannot predict the future, the one thing we know is that the ability to adapt to change will be the most prized asset for any successful worker and productive citizen.

And, make no mistake, this world is changing at lightning speed.

Gone are the days when a high school diploma made the chances of finding a job very good and a four-year college degree guaranteed it. Gone are the days when graduates competed only with their neighbors for jobs. Now they're competing in a world-class marketplace.

The social pressures that students, teachers and their schools face also are far different and in many ways harsher today than at any time in the recent past. The nature of community itself has changed and with it has come a loss of intimacy between the schools and parents of the children who attend them. Many more students come home to empty houses after school because both of their parents work. There are more students from single-parent homes. Drug use, teenage pregnancy and violent crime by youth are on the rise. Because many social services agencies are strained, many of our teachers find themselves handling the roles of babysitter, social worker and psychologist in addition to their regular teaching duties.

Too many of our schools are crowded, run down or making do with less and less at a time when they need more and more to keep up with the advancing technology of the information age. Too many of our schools are still following the model of the assembly-line factory, where things are done by rote and each worker has a specific, clearly defined task to repeat over and over. More of our schools must take their cue from the modern

workplace, where flexibility, problem-solving, communication skills and the ability to function as a team are key to success.

In short, our schools must change to keep pace with a changing world or else our children will be left behind. The pages that follow will explore these main topics and put them in the context of public education in North Carolina.

The Dawning Information Age Has Changed Our World Forever

Personal computers, cellular phones and digital pagers -- not to mention videocassette players and compact discs -- were almost unheard of 25 years ago. Who knows what advances will take place in the next 25 years? But one thing is sure: An explosion of technology has ushered in the information age, and our schools must change to keep abreast. Consider these items compiled in "NCDPI Strategic Planning: An Analysis of Trends Affecting Public Education in the 21st Century," a 1994 report by the Department of Public Instruction:

> •Five-year-old children today will experience more new information in a year than their grandparents did in a lifetime.
>
> •During the past decade, skill requirements on the job changed four times faster than material studied in school.
>
> •Seventy-three percent of today's jobs require information processing skills.
>
> •In 2000, only 15 percent of all jobs will require unskilled labor. There are no more so-called "simple jobs" that don't require a good education. Stocking groceries in a supermarket, for example, now requires a hand-held computer.

•New information doubles every four years. For example, the National Institutes of Health upgraded 85 percent of its storehouse of health information in five years.

•All of the technical information available in 1997 will represent only one percent of the information available by 2050.

•There will be more inventions and technological advancements in the 1990s alone than in the past 150 years.

•On average, a person will have seven careers in a working lifetime.

More Challenges and Distractions Today to Classroom Learning

Schools must change because the nature of their students has changed. While their parents and grandparents were "paper trained" in learning to read and write in static fashion, today's children are far more influenced by the moving stimuli and rapid-fire imagery of television and computers.

Moreover, the pervasive influence of popular culture, from MTV and alternative rock to "The Simpsons," "Melrose Place" and home video, is accelerating the loss of innocence for many of our teenage and pre-adolescent students. In addition, consider these statistics compiled from various sources by subcommittees of the North Carolina School Improvement Panel:

•Fifteen percent of North Carolina households are headed by a single parent.

•About 18 percent of North Carolina's children live below the poverty line.

•One in three children in North Carolina's schools is at risk of dropping out.

•One in three children in the state's schools is performing below grade level.

•There were 8,173 incidents of violence and disorderly conduct reported in North Carolina's schools in 1995-96. Seventy-five percent of these involved either a student in possession of a weapon or in possession of a controlled substance.

•North Carolina is among the highest in the nation in the percentage of children born to single teenagers.

•Today's students are more likely to worry about the future than their parents were.

Schools Today Are Different from those Many Adults Remember

The public must not be afraid for their schools to change because, indeed, their schools are changing already. The schools are growing larger and more culturally diverse. There is a diminished sense of intimacy between the schools and the families of their students. There is greater turnover in the teaching ranks. Many traditional methods of teaching that trace their roots to the advent of mass production in the Industrial Age no longer stand up in the Information Age. And while schools are being pressed to do more for their top students, they also have more to do to bring up their less capable students. Although North Carolina is making progress, it cannot stand still because there is so much to be done. Consider this information compiled from various state government sources and how educators must respond:

•Enrollment in advanced math and science courses has increased 56 percent, and the passing rate on advanced placement exams is up by 17 percent.

•Success in the Information Age requires a solid grasp of math and science -- not just for those students who can handle upper level courses. Moreover, the curriculum in all grades must be revamped to include more attention to technical writing, technical reading and related skills.

•Thirty to thirty-five percent of North Carolina's students do not pass eighth grade competency tests, and 30 to 35 percent need remedial education; 25 percent of state community college students need remedial education.

•The state has been taking a serious look at "social promotion," the practice of passing students from one grade to the next even when they have not learned what they should have learned at the earlier grade.

•North Carolina's graduation rate now stands at 67 percent, and 50 percent of all high school graduates have completed the course requirements for entrance into the University of North Carolina System.

•State educators realize that neither a high school diploma nor a bachelor's degree guarantees success. Most 21st century jobs will require at least 14 years of education and training, and in many professions, additional post-graduate work could be required every three or four years.

•Between 1993-94 and 1998-99 average daily enrollment in North Carolina public schools is projected to increase by 101,766, or 9.1 percent. That is an average increase of about 170 pupils per school district.

•Bigger schools might not be the best answer to growing enrollment. Just as smaller classes provide better conditions for teaching, smaller schools might provide better conditions for safety, order and discipline.

•Forty percent of North Carolina's public school teachers leave the profession in three to five years, many of them frustrated over low pay, long hours and what they see as a lack of professional working conditions and professional respect.

•North Carolina recognizes the need to re-define the nature of the teaching profession and to re-tool the way entry-level teachers are nurtured along their chosen career path.

•Minority children constitute an estimated 34 percent of the school-age population in North Carolina.

•Teachers and students alike must have the opportunity for training to better understand the cultural differences among people of different races and backgrounds. Moreover, the state needs to recruit and retain more minority teachers, who now make up only 17 percent of the teaching ranks.

•The number of schools on year-round calendars has increased more than tenfold this decade, to 94 in 1995-96 from eight in 1991-92. There also has been a movement away from the traditional 50-minute class periods in favor of more flexible scheduling with classes as long as two hours each.

•As the state moves toward higher, more rigorous standards, educators and parents alike must re-examine the whole notion of time as it relates to classroom instruction, student progress, teacher planning, training and before- and after-school programs.

•North Carolina is more committed than ever to loosening state control over local schools and in putting more decision-making power in the hands of the educators closest to the students.

•The trend toward local control accelerated in 1997-98 as 34 charter schools attended by 4,480 students opened across the state.

•In the 1950s, a list of the top 10 student infractions included such offenses as throwing spitballs and chewing gum; today's list is far more serious, including incidents of violence, insubordination, substance abuse and sexual harassment.

•North Carolina schools are now permitted to include character education as part of their normal curriculum, and many of them are.

II.
WHERE HAVE ALL THE PEOPLE GONE?

Chapter Two

Where Have All the People Gone?

Once upon a time, not too long ago, communities rallied around their schools. Members of the community helped to decide what was taught to their children and the best ways to teach it. Members of the community pitched in when a teacher felt short-handed. Attendance at PTA meetings and other school-sponsored events was high.

This is not a fairy tale. This is the way communities used to feel about their public schools. Or, at least, that is what most people like to remember.

No one will argue that, by and large, that is not the way it is today.

So, what happened? Where have all these people gone?

Daniel Yankelovich, president and co-founder of Public Agenda, a non-profit, non-partisan public policy research group based in New York, has pinpointed three trends that contribute to the lack of public support for schools and other public institutions:

> •**Economic pessimism** -- The American public, by and large, no longer enjoys the same real, day-to-day level of economic growth. When the public no longer believes everyone has the same opportunity to make their fortune, people stop believing in the power of the public school to make those dreams come true.
>
> •**Cultural breakdown** -- The American public believes morality is breaking down and that the culture of community, our shared values, is all but wiped out. This contributes to the public perception that crime and violence are rampant, and highly publicized incidents of public school violence heighten this belief.

•**Widening gap between leaders and public** -- The American public believes that public schools, like many other institutions, are in trouble. The public wants to find solutions, but feels that the echelon of so-called experts and leaders in the education community, for example, either does not listen or does not understand what the public is really trying to say.

Research Shows that People Aren't Ready to Give Up on Public Schools

In 1995, Public Agenda, a non-profit, non-partisan, public opinion research and education organization based in New York, released a report on why public support for public schools is in jeopardy across the nation. "Assignment Incomplete: The Unfinished Business of Education Reform," found that support for public schools is fragile but that people are not yet ready to abandon them wholeheartedly in favor of private schools. The "Assignment Incomplete" research suggested that the public faults school policies, not people. Among other things the research found:

•Seventy-one percent of American parents with children in public schools, and 55 percent of the general public, initially give their local schools "good" or "excellent" ratings.

•About half of the general public and two-thirds of the government, business and media leaders said public school teachers are as good or better than private school teachers.

•Fifty-three percent of the public and 59 percent of the leaders said public schools are better than private schools at teaching students to respect people from diverse backgrounds.

•Fifty-one percent of the public and 62 percent of leaders say public schools are better for children with special needs than other kinds of schools.

•Seventy-two percent of parents and the public are concerned about drugs and violence in their local schools.

•Sixty-one percent said their local schools' academic standards were a problem.

•Sixty percent said their local schools did not focus enough attention on teaching the basics.

Private Schools Get Higher Marks for Safety, Order & Teaching Basics

Public Agenda's research shows that the widespread support that public schools used to enjoy among the general public has shifted to private schools. Its research showed that except for public school teachers and educational leadership, all groups surveyed had more favorable opinions of private schools. "Assignment Incomplete" found:

•In the categories that Americans say matter most -- a safe environment, maintaining order and emphasizing higher academic standards -- private schools get the nod over public schools by margins of more than 2 to 1.

•Private schools also are perceived as better than public schools in providing smaller class sizes, an environment that promotes values such as honesty, preparation for college, policies for removing routinely disruptive students, tried and true teaching techniques and an appreciation for religious values.

Even more discouraging, it seems that many public school parents have not actually chosen public school for their children. They send their children to public school because that is what they can afford, but they dream of the alternatives:

•Nationally, 57 percent of public school parents would send their children to private schools if they could afford to, according to "Assignment Incomplete."

•In North Carolina, 52 percent of public school parents would choose a private school over a public school if cost were not a factor, according to a January 1996 poll by the News & Record of Greensboro.

•In North Carolina, about 5 percent of school-age children attend private schools, but the number of students attending private schools shot up 20 percent in just the past three years, according to the Department of Public Instruction.

The Public Has Many Negative Perceptions About Public Schools

From focus groups conducted by the North Carolina School Improvement Panel, here are some verbatim statements from the participants:

- "Public schools are so disorderly and violent, there is no way children can learn, let alone reach their full potential."

- "Educators and administrators are so caught up in their own political agenda and one-upmanship that their policies do not address public concerns."

- "No one would listen to a voice from outside the school, no matter how good the idea."

- "Kids today just aren't as smart or as self-disciplined as they used to be."

- "All teachers are suffering 'burn-out' and don't care if their students learn."

- "Adding more money to education budgets won't help, because schools already mismanage the funds they have."

- "Graduating from high school doesn't mean anything. There are thousands of high school graduates out there who can't even make change at the cash register."

Despite Perceptions, North Carolina Public Schools Are Making Strides

The challenge faced by public school teachers, administrators, committed parents, volunteers and business partners is to convince a disaffected public that schools are not as bad as they seem to be. In North Carolina, there is strong evidence to suggest that the performance of public school students on a variety of measures has improved over the past few years. For example:

•North Carolina ranked among the top 12 performing states in education according to Education Week's first National Report Card. North Carolina earned an "A" on standards and assessments, the cornerstone of its reform effort, The New ABCs of Public Education.

•In Education Week's report, North Carolina also received a high ranking for investing in technology and for providing resources schools need. Each of the state's 119 school districts has a five-year, State Board-approved technology plan for current and future use of this important learning tool. The number of computers in North Carolina schools equals one machine per six students.

•National test data ranked North Carolina 16th in elementary reading performance in 1996.

•North Carolina landed three school systems — Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Guilford, and Wake — in the top 100 listed by Money magazine its January 1996 edition. These systems include 19% of North Carolina's students.

•North Carolina's fourth grade students performed better than both the national average and the Southeast's average in math in 1996 according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress. North Carolina tied with Texas for the largest increase in student performance in fourth grade. Our

eighth- graders had the single highest gain in the nation since 1990 and scored three points below the national average.

•The writing proficiency of North Carolina's fourth-grade students, as measured on state tests, has increased about 32 percent since 1992.

•North Carolina's dropout rate has been cut by 36 percent in the 1990s, although it has gone up less than 1 percent in the past two years. The graduation rate is 67 percent, with half of the graduates going on to post-secondary studies or training.

•Enrollment in advanced math and science courses has increased by 56 percent, and the number of students passing advanced placement (AP) exams has risen 17 percent.

•North Carolina's 23-point gain on the SAT from 1989-1994, was the largest in the nation. North Carolina students posted the highest SAT scores ever in 1996 after seven straight years of improvement, a rate unequaled by any other state in the nation. The state's 59 percent participation is large compared to higher-ranking states where only a very small percentage of students take the test.

•More than 71 JobReady partnerships in 94 counties are flourishing throughout the state, pairing businesses with schools to prepare students for their future careers.

III.
REASONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Chapter Three

Reasons & Expectations

Are the Reasons for Creating Public Schools Still Valid Today?

More than 150 years ago, American leaders created a system of public education to prepare their children to take over the demands of citizenship and the responsibility to make the young democracy economically and socially strong. Phi Delta Kappa, a professional educators society, and the Center on National Education Policy devised a simple checklist against which to judge whether the original reasons for creating a public education system are still valid today:

- **To prepare people to become responsible citizens.** A successful democracy depends on educated citizens who can vote wisely and protect basic human rights.

- **To improve social conditions.** Education can prevent violence, decrease crime and maintain order.

- **To promote cultural unity.** Public education transmits a common language and culture, defining what it means to be an "American."

- **To help people become economically self-sufficient.** Public education gives people the skills and knowledge necessary to earn their own living.

- **To enhance individual happiness and enrich individual lives.** Education teaches people to think, learn and appreciate the world around them.

•**To dispel inequities in education.** Public education guarantees that all children have the opportunity to learn.

•**To ensure a basic level of quality among schools.** Public education guarantees no school will be subject to financial whims or wide divergence in curriculum.

The Public Expects Safety, Order and a Focus on the Basics

What the public wants from public schools sounds simple enough. According to research from state and national sources, the public primarily wants:

Schools That Are Safe

•Seventy-two percent of the general public and 47 percent of public school teachers feel "there's too much drugs and violence" in their community's public schools, according to "Assignment Incomplete."

•In North Carolina, however, 58 percent of public school parents do not fear for their children at school and 72 percent of public school parents say that their children have never expressed fear of their school environment. Yet, the state Task Force on Youth Violence recorded 8,173 incidents of school violence, 75 percent of which involved possession of a weapon or controlled substance.

Order and Discipline in the Classroom

•The North Carolina School Improvement Panel has found that, while public schools in this state are not as unsafe as the public believes, some have become "disrespectful institutions with negative school climates."

•National research by Public Agenda found the public believes that private schools are safer than public schools, better at imparting discipline and order in their classrooms and more effective in removing routinely disruptive students.

Schools That Teach Their Students to Grasp Basic Skills

•Sixty percent of Americans say their local public schools do not place enough emphasis on the basics such as reading, writing and math, according to Public Agenda.

•Forty-seven percent of Americans and 75 percent of community leaders say a high school diploma from their own local public school does not guarantee a student has mastered the basics; 32 percent of teachers and 33 percent of school administrators agree.

•North Carolina's commitment to command of the basics is the hallmark of The New ABCs, one of the existing programs around which school reform is aligned.

The Public Has Expectations Beyond Safety, Order and the Basics

From its various research studies, Public Agenda has found the public also wants from its schools:

•**Higher standards**. The public believes that every child -- regardless of special circumstances -- can meet higher standards and that none should be moved to the next level of study until learning what they were expected to at the level below, according to "First Things First: What Americans Expect from the Public Schools," a 1994 report by Public Agenda.

•**Proven teaching methods**. A majority of Americans distrust such reforms as math education that focuses on concepts and problem-solving (with calculators) rather than on rote learning of arithmetic or the teaching of composition without emphasizing basic grammar and spelling, according to "First Things First."

•**Dynamic classrooms.** Even though people want orderly schools that don't succumb to teaching fads, they want classrooms to be interesting, stimulating and challenging, according to "First Things First."

•**Attention to essential subjects**. In addition to the basics of reading, writing and mathematics, the public agrees on the importance of subjects including American history and geography, biology, physics and chemistry, computer literacy, habits of good citizenship and dealing with problems like drugs and family breakdown, according to "Assignment Incomplete," a 1995 report by Public Agenda.

•**Havens of tolerance and equality**. People expect public schools to teach respect for others, regardless of race, gender, religion or disability. They also want their public

school teachers to treat all students with the same degree of respect that is expected from the students themselves, according to "First Things First."

•**Training grounds for tomorrow's workforce**. Teachers, like the general public and community leaders, believe the schools should focus their energies on giving children the preparation they will need to function in the world, according to "Given the Circumstances: Teachers Talk About Public Education Today," a 1996 report by Public Agenda.

IV.
THE NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PANEL

Chapter Four

The North Carolina School Improvement Panel

Under the aegis of the State Board of Education, the North Carolina School Improvement Panel is acting as a catalyst to improve public education in North Carolina. The panel's 33 members include educators, business and civic leaders, and parents. Last year, the Panel conducted a study of the system to identify what currently was in place and what was needed and made a report to the State Board of Education in January 1997. Now the Panel is assisting with development of a state plan by working with constituent members' groups and assessing progress the state is making on meeting the goals.

The North Carolina School Improvement Panel's Vision

To see the day when North Carolina is a model for states and nations wishing to instill in their young people a capacity to use and apply knowledge at high levels of performance, a strength of character and a love of learning that will empower them to be successful and contributing members of a free, yet ever demanding society.

The Mission of the North Carolina School Improvement Panel

To serve as a catalyst for improving North Carolina schools by fostering collaboration, reviewing progress, communicating results, and making recommendations for continual improvement.

The Guiding Beliefs of the North Carolina School Improvement Panel

The Panel believes that a successful school improvement plan is one that focuses first on the needs of the children with a clearly defined sense of purpose that the public can embrace. The Panel believes that the building blocks are in place for improving public education in North Carolina and that a plan to marshal public involvement in the schools is essential to their future.

The Public Has an Important Role to Play in the Panel's Work

The Panel understands the public's vital role in any successful effort to improve public education. A three pronged approach to informing the

public about state initiative in school reform, promoting discussion and feedback, and issuing a call of support and involvement for public schools is sponsored by the Panel and facilitated by the Office of Education Reform.

Central to the Panel's mission was a series of forums and public meetings across the state held last year. That mission will continue this year when trained teams at the district level host meetings in their communities to spread the word about education improvement in North Carolina and to hear what the people of the state have to say about their public schools.

The Panel Is Like a Magnet to Align Educational Improvement Efforts

In addition to listening and talking to the public, the Panel acts as a magnet for other major education initiatives in North Carolina, both existing and planned, ensuring that all efforts are moving in the same direction of continuous, long-term improvement of public education. The focus of the Panel's efforts so far is on these ongoing initiatives:

- The four strategic priorities adopted in "The ABCs Plus: North Carolina's Strategic Plan for Excellent Schools." Those priorities are: high student performance, safe and orderly schools, quality teachers, administrators, and staff, and effective and efficient operation.

- The New ABCs of Public Education, the statewide plan for holding each school accountable for the academic growth of its students.

- The Education Standards & Accountability Commission which has developed a plan for holding individual students accountable for their own development now being pursued by the Education Standards & Accountability Committee.

- The Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness and its JobReady Partnership Council, which forms partnerships between local schools and local business.

•The Task Force on Site-Based Management, which returns more day-to-day decision-making to teams of educators, parents and others at individual schools.

•The Excellent Schools Act, a bi-partisan effort to attract and keep good teachers by raising academic standards, raising teaching standards and raising teacher pay to the national average.

Information about each of these efforts will be found in the chapters that follow.

V.
THE ABCs PLUS: STRATEGIC PLAN

Chapter Five

The ABCs Plus: North Carolina's Strategic Plan for Excellent Schools

In April 1996, the North Carolina State Board of Education adopted the following missions: North Carolina's public schools will create a system that will be customer driven with local flexibility to achieve mastery of core skills with high levels of accountability in areas of student achievement.

In line with that mission, four strategic priorities were identified: High student performance, safe and orderly schools, quality teachers, administrators, and staff, and effective and efficient operation. (Note: Applications of technology and information management systems will be integral to strategies undertaken in support of the strategic goals.)

Strategic Goals for High Student Performance

- Every child ready to learn.
- Rigorous and relevant academic standards and assessment systems.
- Mastery of essential knowledge and skills by every student.
- Every student prepared for continuous learning and career readiness.

Strategic Goals for Safe and Orderly Schools

- Learning environments inviting and supportive of high student performance.
- Schools free of controlled and illegal substances and all harmful behavior.
- Mutual respect of students, teachers, administrators, and parents.
- Adequate, safe education facilities that support high student performance.

Strategic Goals for Quality Teachers, Administrators, and Staff

- Professional preparation aligned with state priorities.
- A system to recruit, retain, and compensate a diverse corps of quality teachers, administrators, and staff.

•A system to ensure high performance of teachers, administrators, and staff.

•A system of continuous learning and professional development to support high performance of all employees.

•High ethical and professional standards for all employees.

Strategic Goals for Effective and Efficient Operation

•Components of the education system aligned to achieve high performance.

•Decision making authority and control at the most appropriate level closest to the classroom.

•Internal and external partnerships promoted and aligned to state goals.

•Information and accountability systems capable of reporting strategic and operational results.

•A funding system to provide adequate and aligned financial and personnel resources to maximize educational achievement.

VI.
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Chapter Six

Putting It All Together: The New ABCs

This innovative program was developed by the State Board of Education in response to the 1995 General Assembly, which clearly established the Board's primacy in setting policy for public education in North Carolina. The New ABCs represents the Board's first step toward school accountability and becomes the guiding philosophy for continuous school improvement.

The Mission of The New ABCs is to Ensure School Accountability

- The New ABCs of Public Education is a way of charting success of individual schools by measuring achievement in basic subjects and handing control to whom it belongs -- those closest to the students.

- As much as possible, The New ABCs uses tests and techniques that are already in place to accomplish these objectives, and it provides incentives for schools that make exemplary progress in a given year.

- The New ABCs provides for special teams to help schools having trouble reaching their goals, either voluntarily or, as a rare, last resort for low-performing schools getting worse over time, at the direction of the State Board of Education.

Accountability Under The New ABCs Shifts to Individual Schools

In the past, educational progress in North Carolina has been measured by the performance of entire school systems, and these systems were compared to see how well they did with respect to one another and against the state as a whole. Such an approach had its shortcomings. It could not identify poorly performing schools in an otherwise exceptional system; it could not measure if a school was actually making progress from year to year. Under The New ABCs:

•Individual schools, rather than school systems, are held accountable for student progress.

•A school's achievement will only be compared with its past record, not against other schools in other districts or to a state average.

•Teachers and principals at a school will be responsible for how well they teach. The New ABCs recognizes that educators bear some responsibility for the fruits of their labors.

•Students' progress will be followed from the beginning of the school year to the end, and from one grade to the next.

•Achievement will be based on the progress a student makes in a year. Schools will measure a year's worth of growth for a year's worth of school.

•Certified staff in those schools that reached exemplary growth will receive the first ABCs incentive money, bonuses approved by the General Assembly, for their achievement. Those bonuses are $1,000 per qualifying teacher and $500 per qualifying assistant.

The Initial Focus of The New ABCs is Command of the Basics First

Consistent with public expectations and good, common sense, a command of basic skills is the initial focus of The New ABCs: Until students learn to read, write and do mathematics, they cannot become proficient in other subjects of a rich and varied curriculum. With The New ABCs:

•Schools focus on ensuring that all public school students first master the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics.

•Beyond these basics, essential skills of computer literacy, critical thinking, effective oral and written communication skills and the ability to work in teams are emphasized.

•To demonstrate performance, Grades 3-8 use end-of-grade tests in reading and mathematics. In addition, Grades 4 and 7 use an end-of-year test in writing.

•High school students are tested in Algebra I, English I, Biology, Economic, Legal and Political Systems, and U.S. History. In addition, students in the tenth grade take the English II writing test and a comprehensive test in reading and mathematics. A high school's performance is also based on the percentage of students completing a college preparatory or college technical preparatory course of study.

•Emphasis on the basics does not mean a neglect of the fine arts, literature and music or the pure and applied sciences. Focusing on the basics will give teachers freedom to integrate the principles of reading, writing and mathematics in the science, art, computer or other classroom subjects.

The Shift to Local Control is a Key Element of The New ABCs

National research shows that almost two-thirds of the American public trust teachers rather than Washington or state governments to make decisions about how to run the public schools. The New ABCs turns this trust into action by putting more day-to-day decisions about local schools into the hands of the people closest to the students -- teachers, parents, principals and the members of the community at large.

Under The New ABCs:

•Communities are free to form their own school-based management teams that decide what works best for their students. The school improvement plans devised by such teams are no longer subject to review by the State Board of Education, but rather are reviewed by local school boards.

•Schools may decide locally whether to teach phonics or character education.

•A Charlotte elementary school decided to group students according to ability for special, 45-minute reading and "dialogue" sessions each morning. As a result, the school's reading test scores are up and students who thought reading was a chore are now reading for fun, on their own.

•Schools can request waivers to redirect resources or funds to areas of local need instead of areas where they might be redundant or unneeded.

•Schools can enter lease-purchase agreements for such high-tech equipment as computers.

•An Asheville elementary school fleshed out an understaffed reading program by using funds that otherwise would have gone to fill vacant teaching assistant positions. The school requested and received a waiver, and the reading program is now flourishing as a result.

First Year ABCs Results

•The New ABCs operated in the elementary and middle schools in the 1996-97 school year and was implemented in the high schools in the 1997-98 school year.

•Elementary and middle school performance was reported in three ways: the school met its expected growth based on a formula that factored in past performance, statewide

averages and a statistical adjustment; the school had exemplary growth, which means the school exceeded expected growth by an additional 10%; or the school failed to meet its growth standard as determined by the State Board.

•Over half of the state's elementary and middle schools, 56.7%, met either expected or exemplary growth standards with 32.4% being classified as exemplary (529 schools) and 24.3% classified as meeting expected growth (397 schools). In this first year, 7.5% of the schools (122 schools) were designated as low-performing by the State Board. Fifteen of the neediest schools were selected to work with assistance teams this year to help staffs develop ways to improve student performance.

•Slightly over thirty-five percent of the schools received no recognition.

•There are three levels of recognition in the student growth area. The 25 schools in the state showing the highest amount of student growth are recognized along with schools demonstrating exemplary growth and expected growth.

•There are two levels of recognition for student performance. Twelve schools received recognition as Schools of Excellence in the first year of the New ABCs. For student performance, School of Excellence is the designation for those schools where at least 90% of the students tested performed at or above grade level and when the school met expected growth.

•A school where 80 to 89.9 percent of students performed at or above the grade level standard is designated as a School of Distinction. In the first year of the New ABCs, 158 schools received recognition as Schools of Distinction.

Pending Issues for Public Discussion About The New ABCs

As with any work in progress, many issues are still under discussion regarding The New ABCs. These may provoke debate and interchange at the local level as public interest in the schools is renewed and broadened in communities across the state. Among the possible issues:

- With regard to control, should the local board of education have the authority to veto any school's improvement plan?

- Will incentive money always be there for schools that exceed their growth and performance goals?

- What protections are there for good teachers who find themselves in low-performing, low-growth schools?

- Is there discussion about additional employment or staff development time for teachers to do all the things The New ABCs allow them to do?

- Is there consensus about what essential subjects should be studied besides reading, writing and math?

Sentiments such as these are valid positions, and education reformers must take heed to listen carefully when the public expresses them. For effective communication to proceed, it is essential that the people perceive that educational reformers are paying attention and discussing their concerns rather than merely sticking strictly to a prepared agenda.

VII.
RIGOROUS, REAL AND RELEVANT STANDARDS

Chapter Seven

Rigorous, Real and Relevant Standards

The North Carolina Standards & Accountability Commission was created by the General Assembly in 1993 to establish a rigorous and relevant education program for all students in this state. Its mission was to ensure that all graduates of North Carolina public schools have command of the skills required to become productive members of the workforce and succeed in life. The Commission has completed its work and submitted a report to the State Board of Education. A Committee on Standards & Accountability has been established to advise the State Board of Education on student performance standards.

The Guiding Beliefs of the Standards & Accountability Commission

The Commission developed a model for holding students accountable for what they must learn. The model complements The New ABCs, which provides a model for holding individual schools accountable for their students' progress. The rationale for holding North Carolina's students accountable for their own progress stems from the beliefs that:

- All students can learn at higher levels.
- Expectations of students must not only be high, but also consistent.
- Today's students need a higher level of education just to survive and to compete internationally at world-class levels.
- Schools should measure their students' real, demonstrated performance, and not promote students based on how much "seat time" they log in a given school year.

The Commission Identified Six Criteria for Keeping Meaningful Standards

No discussion about higher standards would be complete without a thoughtful assessment of the nature of the standards themselves. The

Education Standards & Accountability Commission identified standards that are:

Specific	For every subject, standards should define exactly what content must be covered.
Public	Everyone should know exactly what kind of expectations are held for the young people in the schools.
Rigorous	Standards that will really improve student performance must be challenging enough to require real effort.
High-Stakes	Once the higher standards are set they must be met or else students will face the consequences of their poor performance.
Inclusive	Standards must be realistic so that all students have a chance to achieve at higher levels.
Measurable	The requirements for demonstrating a command of knowledge must be made clear to students and the criteria for judging performance must be known.

North Carolina Must Adapt Its Curriculum to Compete Globally

Competition in the global marketplace requires that North Carolina students be held to higher standards in order to stay competitive with their peers around the world. The old standards served a purpose then, but the Commission believes North Carolina must do better to ensure that its students are able to keep up with a growing body of knowledge and are able to compete against students from countries with even more stringent requirements. Consider this:

- Harvard University accepts high school graduates from Europe as sophomores. Harvard accepts American high school graduates only as freshmen.

- The Committee believes students should be able to demonstrate that they can apply the knowledge they have gained in the classroom to the real world outside, which is the reason behind encouraging school-to-work learning. This, in turn, complements efforts of the Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness and its JobReady Initiative, which work to build networks of mutual learning and benefit between the business and school communities.

- The Committee is working on developing fair and valid ways of assessing student progress in addition to just state tests. One recommendation calls for students to complete a senior project of their own design that provides the kind of problem-solving practice, for example, they will need after graduation. Current state assessments were designed as a system of accountability; therefore, they alone are not adequate assessments of student performance.

Key Recommendations of the Standards & Accountability Commission

•Define grades 4, 8, 10 and 12 as the benchmark years. Students who do not meet standards at those points should not be placed at the next level of study. This would put an end to a common practice known as "social promotion."

•Require as a condition for graduation that high school students demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate words and ideas, use numbers and data to solve problems, process information, work as a member of a team and use technology in ways that anticipate challenges they will face in the world of work.

•General curriculum structures should be flexible to let teachers tailor their instruction to make depth, rather than breadth, the focus so that students develop a deeper understanding of the subjects they study.

•Drop the General Studies Curriculum and adopt a college tech prep or college prep curriculum. This would let students pick a program of study during their high school years that will prepare them for post-secondary education or training.

•A career development plan should be devised for every high school student once a prep program of study is selected.

Pending Issues for Public Discussion About Standards & Accountability

Research shows that the public clearly supports higher academic standards. But because people know that the enforcement of higher standards will have consequences for many students, there are likely to be many questions about the Commission's recommendations. Consider:

•Research shows that 45 percent of the public fears that more children will drop out of school if they feel pressured by higher standards. Some studies have shown that dropout rates increase the first few years after higher standards are introduced. What will be the fiscal effect on North Carolina if the dropout rate increases? What will be the human cost?

•While research shows that 81 percent of the public rejects the idea of social promotion, what alternatives exist for students who do not meet standards and are denied promotion?

•What happens to students in lower grades who meet and exceed standards meant for higher grades? Will they be allowed to proceed at a faster pace? If so, will this require fundamental shifts in the way schools are structured?

•Where do children with special needs fit into the higher standards picture?

•Who determines what standards are in each subject, and who decides whether a child has met them?

•What would be the practical effect on graduation rates of eliminating the General Studies curriculum?

VIII.
MAKING STUDENTS "JOBREADY"

Chapter Eight

Making Students "JobReady"

To say that the 21st-century job market will be tough would be a gross understatement. In fact, the competition for the jobs that today's kindergartners will inherit will be survival of the fittest. Those without essential, flexible skills will be hard pressed to find satisfying careers.

Many North Carolina students graduate from high school without a clear picture of the career options available to them or any idea how to turn their talents and interests into rewarding, profitable careers for lives as productive citizens.

As a remedy, the Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness, created by Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. in 1993, has developed the "JobReady" initiative. JobReady brings together public schools, community colleges, universities, parents and local businesses to prepare students for a smooth transition to adult life and the workforce. Rather than being a government job training program, JobReady is a key element of educational reform.

The Vision of the JobReady Initiative

JobReady envisions a public education system in which all students will leave high school with a strong foundation in the basics, with skills needed to be productive adults in the 21st century and with a clear direction of the career path they plan to pursue. To better reflect that commitment and the strong connection the program has to North Carolina business and industry, the JobReady program will move from the Governor's Office to the Department of Commerce this year.

The Mission of the JobReady Initiative

To generally promote improvements to public education that will provide all students with a strong foundation of academic and technical skills that will prepare them for successful careers and a lifetime of learning and to mobilize communities across North Carolina to create partnerships that respond to the localized needs of their students.

The Guiding Beliefs of the JobReady Initiative

JobReady believes that all high school graduates can and must be held to a high level of rigorous academic standards and demonstrate command of critical thinking, problem solving, oral and written communication and team work regardless of their plans after high school. In practice, JobReady believes:

- All students need some type of education or training after high school graduation to succeed in the workforce of the future and that all students need exposure to careers so they can make intelligent career decisions.

- Through partnerships at the local level, JobReady can integrate the curriculum so that students can see the relevance and importance of school work.

- Every student must have the opportunity to participate in at least one work-based learning experience before graduation from high school. These could range from one day's "shadowing" at a local business to internships or even apprenticeships.

- Schools should provide all students with comprehensive career guidance, from kindergarten, through 12th grade and beyond.

How Students Benefit from the JobReady Initiative

- Learning focused on career pathways.

•Applied learning, which leads to a higher retention rate of knowledge.

•Better understanding of the connection between school and the workplace.

•More options for job or further education success.

•Work experience related to a career goal before high school graduation.

•Increased self-confidence from success at both school and in the world of work.

•Stronger academic preparation and skills for a lifetime of learning.

How Employers Benefit from the JobReady Initiative

•A literate, skilled and motivated workforce prepared for the demands of the workplace and flexible enough for the inevitable changes the future will bring.

•Greater productivity that comes with a more versatile workforce.

•Reduced employee retraining or upgrading costs and fewer workplace errors.

•Participation in a broad-based partnership for public education that in turn helps out the bottom line.

How Parents Benefit from the JobReady Initiative

•Their children are motivated to stay in school and to excel.

•Their children have more exposure to a wider world of career opportunities.

•Their children have a cost-effective way of exploring their career options without the expense associated with spending years at college switching majors or in the workforce, switching jobs.

•Their children are well-prepared through a public education system that culminates with their success in the workplace or in the field of higher education.

How Communities Benefit from the JobReady Initiative

•They have the partnerships in place between educators and local business leaders that are essential to providing a framework for continuous improvement of their schools.

•There is lower unemployment and a higher quality of life because of a vibrant local economy.

•They have a skilled and productive citizenry that is able and motivated to tackle local issues, improve local conditions and generally achieve a high quality of life that attracts newcomers and additional business investment.

Pending Issues for Public Discussion About the JobReady Initiative

JobReady is not a static program, etched in stone. It offers communities a framework around which they can build their own responses to their particular needs. Like other initiatives at work around the state, JobReady is open for modification if the public identifies areas that could be improved. Some of the areas still under discussion include:

•Why is something like JobReady necessary? Shouldn't graduating from high school and heading to college be enough preparation for a future career?

•How does JobReady fit with The New ABCs and its definition of "basics"? If we are emphasizing basic subjects, is there still room for job preparation?

•How does JobReady differ from traditional vocational education?

•How does JobReady fit with other career preparation initiatives in the state?

•What exactly is meant by a career path? How is it different from the existing college-prep or tech-prep programs of today?

•Do JobReady's career majors for high schools students cover all the areas in which students plan future careers?

•What flexibility will students have if they change their minds about their career pathways?

•What systems are in place for assessing success of JobReady? How will we know if JobReady is achieving its goals?

•Does JobReady make provision for special needs students?

IX.
EXCELLENT SCHOOLS ACT

Chapter Nine
The Excellent Schools Act

Thirty percent of North Carolina's new teachers leave the classroom in the first three years, because of low pay, school violence and inadequate preparation for the classroom. The Excellent Schools Act is a bi-partisan effort to attract and keep good teachers by raising academic standards, raising teaching standards and raising teacher pay to the national average. North Carolina is the first state in the country to take this comprehensive approach to tying higher teacher pay to higher standards.

Raising Standards and Accountability

•This measure is designed to attract better prepared beginning teachers. It raises the requirements to enter and graduate from a school of education and requires all beginning teachers to pass the PRAXIS II test — the toughest national test for teachers. It provides beginning teachers with an experienced mentor and extra days at the beginning of their first year for orientation.

•Tougher evaluations will require teachers who have not obtained tenure to be observed four times a year, including once by a teacher, and be evaluated annually by a school administrator.

•Higher standards for a continuing license will require teachers to work three years — instead of the current two — and pass rigorous performance-based evaluations to get a license.

•Higher standards for tenure will require teachers to work four years, instead of three, and undergo four annual observations — one by a teacher — and an annual evaluation. The measure requires the school board to approve or deny tenure for teachers.

•Higher standards for re-licensure make re-licensure more rigorous and more meaningful.

•It will be easier to fire bad teachers through a streamlined dismissal process that removes poor teachers from the classroom more quickly.

Higher Pay for Higher Performance

•Pay for performance will reward teachers for achievement under The New ABCs plan (bonus of up to $1,500); earning National Board Certification (12% pay raise) and earning a more rigorous master's degree (10% increase by year 2000).

•The pay for new teachers will be from $21,330 to $25,000 by year 2000.

•Teachers will be rewarded with larger pay raises when they meet higher standards for getting a continuing license and earning tenure.

•Teachers will be paid for handling extra responsibilities like mentoring new teachers, helping students who are falling behind or undertaking professional development.

•The most qualified, most experienced teachers will earn the highest salaries — more than $53,000 by the year 2000.

X.
PUTTING SCHOOLS IN COMMUNITIES' HANDS

Chapter Ten

Putting Schools in Communities' Hands

Common sense says public education improvement works best when the schools and the decisions that affect them are placed in the hands of the people at and around the schools themselves. That is the guiding theme behind the principle of School-Based (often called Site-Based) Management, that the people at the "site" -- which is the school and the community around the school -- are the ones best qualified to decide what goes on inside the school doors.

North Carolina legislators realized this when they passed the School Improvement and Accountability Act of 1989, which mandated the decentralization of decision making and authority in education. Instead of all decisions filtering down from Raleigh, more control and authority was given to individual schools and vested in local school improvement teams which develop school improvement plans to improve student performance. A school improvement team should consist of the principal, representatives of the assistant principals, instructional personnel, instructional support personnel, teacher assistants assigned to the school building, and parents of children enrolled in the school.

A legislative act was passed in 1997 to allow parents to elect the parents who serve on school improvement teams. The act reads, "Unless the local board of education has adopted an election policy, parents shall be elected by parents of children enrolled in the school in an election conducted by the parent and teacher organization of the school or, if none exists, by the largest organization of parents formed for this purpose.

School-Based Management not only requires parent involvement, but demands the innovative approaches resulting from parent input in order to be successful. PTA/PTO involvement is more important than ever.

The Guiding Beliefs of School-Based Management

The guiding principle behind School-Based Management is that public schools are not factories run by the state to turn out the next round of workers. Rather, each school belongs to the people in the community in which the school is based. And, for that reason, a school in Wilmington, for example, might need to try very different teaching methods or emphasize very different subjects than a school in Asheville, because of the different needs of each community.

This guiding principle also underlies the work of The New ABCs of Public Education, the North Carolina Education Standards & Accountability Commission, the Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness and its JobReady Partnership Council, and other improvement efforts.

Educational Leadership is not Limited to Educators

School-Based Management sees potential for leadership in education by participants at all levels of the education community. Effective, innovative improvement to public education in North Carolina can come from the local school board, PTA, classroom teacher, principal, students, parents, volunteers or anyone who sees a need and generates a good idea to fill it.

School-Based Management also recognizes that good policies made in Raleigh may not be in the best interests of a school once they reach that level. So, under the School Improvement and Accountability Act, individual schools are assured of flexibility to request waivers from laws that would stand in the way of putting their plans in action.

Consider, for example, the laws about textbook purchases. If a school decides it can get by with last year's edition of its math textbook, but that it needs more computers for its media center, that school can request a waiver and funnel its textbook funds to the areas where monies are most necessary.

Sharing Information and Helping Teachers

Another laudable aspect of School-Based Management is the idea that what works for one school might work for another, if only the information were available. For that reason, the Task Force on School-Based Management helped six North Carolina districts form the North

Carolina Network. The Network enables the six districts to share information about which school-based efforts are working, which ones aren't and what novel approaches are being discussed over the table in the teachers' lounges. The Network hopes to expand and bring even more districts into the web of information sharing.

School-Based Management recognizes that the teachers at the school are the front-line reformers, the ones who are able to see the results or failings of any improvement effort. Therefore, teachers need to have the best training available in how to create and lead teams of improvement-minded people.

For this reason, the first North Carolina Teacher Academy was offered in 1994 for teachers and administrators to help them implement school-based management at their schools. Total Quality Education training in such areas as decision making, consensus building, problem solving and team building is offered to help teachers make the most out of the decision-making responsibility that has been handed to them.

Pending Issues for Public Discussion About School-Based Management

School-Based Management sounds good in theory, but there are likely to be many public questions and concerns about how well theory will translate into practice because School-Based Management is a departure from traditional lines of authority.

- Isn't it a paradox for the state to mandate School-Based Management?

- Will the state provide the additional time and resources necessary to provide teachers with the training needed to take greater roles in school-based decision-making?

- What happens to the notion of School-Based Management if a principal isn't willing to surrender control?

- What happens if a local school board rejects the recommendations of a school-based improvement team?

XI.
WORK OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PANEL

Chapter Eleven

Work of the North Carolina School Improvement Panel

For over a year, the North Carolina School Improvement Panel worked to develop a set of recommendations that will be the basis for the single plan to improve North Carolina's schools. The Panel divided into six study groups, each one examining an issue that the North Carolina public has said it wants examined in surveys, focus groups and public forums.

The Panel's approach was to examine the various education initiatives, decide how they mesh with one another and determine what gaps need to be filled to fulfill its vision of a model public school system with world-class standards and world-class achievement.

In January 1997, the Panel presented its final report to the State Board of Education in a document titled, "Bringing It Together for Children in Public Schools." Significantly, the Panel subtitled the effort, "A Work in Progress in North Carolina." The Panel's recommended strategies provide a systematic framework for the State Board of Education to work through priorities ranging from professional educator issues to school safety. The ABCs Plus: A Strategic Plan for Excellent Schools is based upon this initial work. The foundation report is described more fully in the rest of this chapter.

The New ABCs Are the Foundation of Continuous Schools Improvement

The Panel believes that The New ABCs has paved the way for the state to move from holding schools accountable for the education growth of their students to holding students themselves accountable for being able to use and apply knowledge at high levels of achievement. Such a transition, the Panel believes, will require both an investment in training teachers and in building community awareness and support.

The Panel grappled with the appropriate curriculum balance between academic and workforce preparedness but endorsed JobReady's goal of increasing student awareness of the nature of different career choices and its belief that all graduates can and must be held to a high level of rigorous standards regardless of their plans after high school.

Professional Educators Hold the Key to School Improvement

In addressing professional needs, the Panel believes that teaching might be the only white-collar occupation in the nation that does not automatically come with a discrete work area, a desk, a phone and a computer — and one of the last that takes for granted "pitching in" for non-professional chores like hall patrol, collecting tickets at football games and cafeteria duty. These conditions are symptomatic of far deeper problems that must be addressed if North Carolina is to successfully recruit, train and retain the best and brightest to be classroom teachers.

The role of school leadership is critical to successful school improvement. Efforts like the Principal's Executive Program and the Principal's Fellows Program touch only a fraction of the principals and assistant principals in North Carolina who bear the brunt of accountability in any school improvement plan.

Partnerships Are Essential to Both School Safety and School Excellence

Finally, addressing the need for school-community partnerships, the Panel's recommendations highlighted how collaborative efforts can lead to sound, preventive measures to ensure safe and orderly environments as well as providing the necessary public support for high standards of achievement. What follows are the highlights of the Panel's recommendations:

Goal 1: Bringing It All Together Into a Unified System

•Bring the dozens of promising school improvement initiatives into one, coherent plan and marshal all of the state's resources behind it.

•Set in place a timetable that ensures that world-class curriculum and assessment practices are in place by 2001; focus the system on the application of knowledge, not on rote memorization.

•Establish benchmarks that require 10th graders and high school seniors to demonstrate they have mastered the basics before they move ahead or graduate.

•Incorporate programs that better prepare high school graduates for college and the world of work.

•Build public awareness and support for the changes this plan will bring to schools across North Carolina.

Goal 2: **Providing Educators With the Tools and Time Needed to Achieve High Standards**

•Revamp and strengthen the quality of teacher and administrative preparation programs.

•Lengthen, by 2001, North Carolina's instructional year to be the longest in the nation — moving from today's 180 days of instruction to 190 days.

•Compensate teachers at a rate at or above the national average through a combination of a more professional salary schedule, extended contracts and the creation of challenging new roles for teachers.

•Align all of the state's many training resources behind an integrated training program that equips educators with the skills and knowledge they need to advance school improvement.

•Establish a Research Council charged with focusing on coordinating research in school improvement and putting the results into the hands of teachers.

•Bring the instructional promise of technology to every school in North Carolina.

•Devise a system of funding schools that respects the enormous differences that exist among communities and school systems.

Goal 3: **Partnering for Safe Schools and High Standards**

•Ensure that every school is a safe, secure learning environment.

•Collaborate and partner with the public to bring education standards to a new level.

Public Participation Remains Key to School Improvement

While considering what to recommend to the State Board of Education regarding a single, focused education improvement plan for North Carolina, the Panel held seminars, education forums, focus groups and other sessions across the state to hear from educations, business leaders, parents and the general public. Citizen groups across the state are now being trained to lead their own community forums.

This process of reaching out to North Carolinians and carrying their good ideas back to Raleigh was the Panel's response to what the public has said it wants.

What remains is the public's commitment to come to the table and hear the ideas being hashed out and offer suggestions, or, yes, even criticisms. The Panel welcomes comments, both positive and negative, because this is not some sort of top-down decree from Raleigh that no one understands. The Panel wants the public to "own" the plan and the only way to do that is to make sure that the public creates it through meaningful, frank input.

To ensure public input and support for its recommendation the Panel wants:

•Everyone in North Carolina to be fully aware of the real state of public education, not just the statistics or isolated incidents of success or failure.

•Everyone in North Carolina to be aware of the work being done by the major task forces, panels and commissions and by the teachers and administrators in the individual schools.

•Everyone in North Carolina to have confidence that whatever challenges might face public education, they will be worked out through teamwork.

XII.
IS THERE A PUBLIC TO ENGAGE?

Chapter Twelve

Is There a Public to Engage?

North Carolina's education community, led by the North Carolina School Improvement Panel, is working to inform and engage the public in the process of improving public education.

The first part of that plan falls to the education community itself. It must gather and disseminate to the public information about successes in the schools and about efforts to build on those successes. The second part of the plan -- engaging the public -- presupposes there is a public waiting to be engaged. That might not always be the case.

Advocates of public education must realize from the outset that in any given community there may not be enough people outside the community of educators who are supportive enough of the schools to take an active role on their behalf.

Public Engagement Might Be Redefined as Community Building

People in North Carolina communities are moving away from public schools for the reasons outlined in Chapter Two.

If a strong sense of community spirit already exists in a particular area, engaging the public in education reform could be as straightforward as reminding the community how important its schools are, outlining what the state has done to put more control of the schools into local hands, and identifying local needs that can be mended with local hands.

But in communities that do not have a strong sense of themselves as groups of inter-related people, local schools will have a harder time of it. As research from the Kettering Foundation suggests, communities vary in civic spirit, and schools may have trouble relating to a community that has no sense of itself or has no clearly defined general interest.

So, reclaiming public schools has to start with rebuilding the public's sense of community. Once a group of people think of the place they live as "their community," they start re-examining such institutions as the local schools and re-evaluating their roles in making them better.

Rebuilding the Sense of Public Ownership of Public Education

The Kettering Foundation suggests seven steps to rebuilding the sense of public ownership needed for a community to take responsibility for improving public education:

1. **Name the problems in public terms.**
   It does no good for the educators to muddy the issue of education improvement in jargon the public neither uses nor understands. When talking about education and improvement, describe it in simple terms that reflect people's real, daily lives.

2. **Make public choices through dialogue.**
   Deliberate about education issues with the public. Do not preach to PTA or town hall meetings from the podium. Let the people at these face-to-face meetings offer opinions and let the group weigh the pros and cons of options presented.

3. **Take public action.**
   Public action is organic. It does not proceed in a straight line from top to bottom the way government action does. Let people develop plans that might seem disorderly at first, but if they grow out of meaningful public dialogue, a sense of direction will ultimately emerge.

4. **Judge results publicly.**
   Evaluate progress publicly and take public criticism of things that aren't going the way the public wants. Be open to modifying or changing plans, if that's what a community decides.

5. **Reaffirm education imperatives.**
   Remind the public of the power of education to change people's lives for the better. Remind people that "education" is a noble cause, even though they may think there are problems with the "schools" that take up that cause. Remind everyone that teachers aren't the only educators. We are all educating one another in some way every day.

6. **Re-establish a public mandate.**

Allow the public the chance to be involved in setting the mandate for the local schools. Through school improvement teams, invite people from the community into the schools to discuss local problems and frame local solutions. If the mandate comes from the public, the public is more likely to feel ownership of it.

7. **Protect the larger public interests.**

Only the public can protect its goals from "special interest" groups that would seek to co-opt the agenda to advance a limited set of goals. Help a community promote the majority view with its schools.

If a strong sense of community spirit already exists in a particular area, that community need only be shown how important its schools are and they will likely jump on board to help.

If the community in a certain place has trouble thinking of itself as a unit with common goals and values, the first step to bringing that community back into the community's schools is to help people reconnect with one another.

As said in previous chapters, listening to what people have to say, taking those comments and using them to frame plans and allowing people the chance to frame their own plans are the keys to improving education, or any other community institution, for that matter.

For too long, people have felt excluded from the process of public education improvement. They have felt that decisions are handed down after the fact and there is nothing they can do but accept them. That must change. The public must be involved from the beginning. They must name the problem, offer solutions, frame the plans, do the work and critique themselves. Only then can meaningful, long-term improvement take place.

XIII.
THE PROCESS OF CHANGING PUBLIC OPINION

Chapter Thirteen

The Process of Changing Public Opinion

Putting the public back in public education rests on changing public opinion. Most North Carolinians are not involved in efforts to improve public education because of one or more of the following reasons and opinions:

- They believe public schools are fine as they are and no change is needed.
- They have no idea what is going on in the public schools.
- They have no children in public schools, so they believe public education does not affect them.
- They acknowledge that public schools are facing challenges, but they have no idea how to help.
- They believe that the so-called problems in the public schools are so complex and so serious that they are beyond help.
- They believe that they cannot make a difference.
- They do not feel welcome in the local schools.

Changing Public Opinion Is at the Heart of Improving Public Education

To improve public education in North Carolina, the task at hand is to change these opinions and perceptions. To effect that change, one must understand how the public shapes its opinions.

Daniel Yankelovich, a public opinion analyst whom Fortune magazine calls "the dean of American pollsters," says the public's thinking on any issue progresses through seven "predictable" stages. This has served Yankelovich well as co-founder of Public Agenda, a non-profit, non-partisan, public opinion research and education organization based in New York.

Yankelovich believes that, once leaders understand how opinions are created in the public mind, the path to changing those opinions and inspiring action becomes self-evident.

North Carolina School Reform and the Seven Stages of Public Opinion

According to Yankelovich, once leaders understand how opinions are created in the public mind, the path to change those opinions and inspiring action becomes self-evident. What follows are Yankelovich's seven stages of public opinion and how they correspond to public opinion about educational improvement in North Carolina.

1. Dawning Awareness

People become aware of the issue and some aspects of it.

- The purpose of the Panel's communications campaign is to promote awareness of the need for education improvement.

2. Greater Urgency

People begin to feel the issue is important and something must be done.

- This is true of those North Carolinians who are involved in education in some way, whether they are teachers, administrators, parents or business partners. But, this sense of urgency still has not grabbed hold of the majority of the public. This, too, is something the Panel's engagement campaign is designed to change.

3. **Discovering the Choices**

People begin to focus on alternatives to deal with the issue. Some choices appear immediately; others take years to appear.

•Currently, talk of choices and alternatives in North Carolina is limited to the education community, their business partners and parents of school-age children. The Panel's engagement campaign would open the process to include the three-quarters of the adult population without school-age children.

4. **Wishful Thinking**

People begin to resist realistic compromises and erect barricades of wishful thoughts.

•In North Carolina, those people who have examined the choices have a lot of wishful thinking as far as getting involved and turning schools around are concerned. But when faced with concrete examples of the personal efforts they must make, many abandon the idea.

5. **Weighing the Choices**

People begin to wrestle with the pros and cons of each option. This is the stage when the real hard work is done.

•This is what the North Carolina School Improvement Panel aims to do with is public engagement plan -- arm the public with the sense of urgency and the choices available.

6. **Taking a Stand Intellectually & . . .**

7. **. . . Making a Responsible Judgment Morally and Emotionally**

People begin to form their opinion, confront their resistance and want to take action.

•This is the ultimate goal of the statewide effort to inform and engage the public. The North Carolina School Improvement Panel and education advocates truly believe that, once the public at large learns how it can become a part

of making good things happen in our state's classroom, support for further improvements will blossom, people will be eager to lend a hand and the public will finally be returned to public education.

APPENDICES

Appendices

Appendix A	Additional Programs and Resources.
Appendix B	School Improvement Grants.
Appendix C	Questions and Answers About Education Improvement in North Carolina.
Appendix D	Talking About Education Improvement in North Carolina.
Appendix E	Total Quality Education.
Appendix F	List of References.

Appendix A
ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

There are many innovative, successful educational programs and resources in North Carolina. The purpose of this appendix is to begin creating a list that can be a resource for advocates for public education across North Carolina.

To fill out such a list will require submissions from people across the state. To suggest a program or resource for this list write to:

Successful Programs
N.C. School Improvement Panel
301 N. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825

A sampling of programs and resources includes:

A+ Schools Program: The A+ Schools Program aims to show that a collaboration between interdisciplinary teaching and daily arts instruction improves the learning environment and raises academic performance.

In the 1995-96 school year, 25 North Carolina public schools started the four-year program. In addition to integrating the arts into many aspects of the daily curriculum, the A+ schools also established strong partnerships with nearby schools of education to influence the way their teachers are educated. The A+ schools also developed strong ties to community arts agencies to make better use of the state's vast cultural resources.

Contact: Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts, Winston-Salem, 910-722-0030

Communities in Schools of North Carolina: The mission of Cities/Communities in Schools is to build partnerships between schools and their communities to help all students -- but especially those at risk of failure -- succeed in education. Linking businesses, community non-profit agencies, churches, parents and volunteers with the local schools guarantees that all members of a community feel that they have a stake in the success of the public schools.

The Communities in Schools program allows students to participate in internships, apprenticeships and job shadowing. The program also

offers training seminars and conferences for the community, conducts research and provides community-building assistance as needed. The program focuses on attendance, literacy, substance abuse, job training, teen pregnancy, teen suicide, juvenile crime and other issues which lie at the heart of the dropout dilemma.

Contact: Communities in Schools of North Carolina, Raleigh, 919-832-2700.

NC Partners: Formed as an umbrella organization for those groups, organizations and businesses across the state that are involved in fostering partnerships to improve North Carolina's schools. Contact: 919-781-6833.

NC Star: Uses trained college volunteers to talk with students about racial issues and getting along with one another. Students come into the schools to spend time talking about conflict and ways to avoid it. This service is available through a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and operated through Cities/Communities in Schools.

North Carolina Business Committee for Education**: Total Quality Management Project** guidance and training for schools involved with Total Quality Education initiatives. This group can also tell about local business-supported projects or how to start one. Contact: 919-715-3535.

North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute: Offers technical assistance to communities on a variety of child-related matters including education. Contact: 919-834-6623.

North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry: Realizes the paramount role public education plays in the economic health of North Carolina. Contact: 919-836-1400.

Public School Forum of North Carolina: Can identify educational foundations, partnerships or networks at work in communities across North Carolina. Contact: 919-781-6833.

REAL Enterprises: Can lead to community-based programs in the schools. Contact: 919-688-7325.

North Carolina School Improvement Grants
Awarded May 1995
Renewed June/July 1996

Technology

Alexander, Ashe, Avery, Wilkes, Alleghany, and Caldwell Counties NW (PD/PS-Awarded 5/95-$146,980; Renewed 6/96-$200,000)= $346,980
Contact: Chuck Blanton, Appalachian State University, 704-262-3005

The purpose of this proposal is to take an existing technology infrastructure and train schools, teachers, and parents to effectively access and use the resources of a collaboratively developed electronic Home Page and Internet. The Home Page will contain a bulletin board, lesson plans, idea exchange, regional classroom and request for support. Concentration will be in professional development, math, science, and parental involvement.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg SW(PD-Awarded 5/95-$75,000; Renewed 6/96-$75,000; New Award 10/97-$75,000)=$225,000
Contact: Carol Newman, Grant Development Coordinator, 704-379-7051

This grant will improve student performance through teachers using technology and integrating the use of technology with the math and reading curricula.

New Award

- **Reversing the Tide of Teacher Attrition**

The overall purpose of this initiative is to implement a model of comprehensive support for first-year, initially licensed teachers at the middle school level to increase teachers' capacity and reduce the rate of attrition. Strategies include support coaches, team planning time, helping teachers to maximize instructional time and creating safe and orderly classrooms.

Columbus SE (PD-Awarded 5/95-$150,000; Renewed 7/96-$75,000; New Award 10/97-$75,000)=$300,000
Contact: Dr. Jimmy Turbeville, Director of Staff Development, 910-642-5168

This proposal involving UNC-W and Southeastern Community College will seek to 1) raise computer proficiency; 2) enhance teacher instruction; and 3) integrate computer technology into classroom instruction. The two IHEs will provide the teacher training.

New Award

- **Using Technologies to Develop Thematic Units**

This grant will focus on expanding the use of instructional technologies in the existing curriculum through utilization of thematic units at the elementary level.

Technology Continued

Hoke SW (LR-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 6/96-$75,000; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)=$220,500
Contact: Jeff Moss, Assistant Superintendent, 910-875-4106

This initiative will provide staff development so that all staff will demonstrate computer literacy. Teacher ability to use computer technology will convey importance to the students who, in turn will model the teachers in using computer technology, to improve their own achievement.

Lee R (PD/PS- Awarded 5/95-$74,712; Renewed 6/96-$75,000; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)= $220,212
Contact: Donna Clelland/Robert Logan, 919-776-0443

Lee County will train teachers as technology integration specialists for each school. These specialists would then train teachers at their schools and provide on-site support. Pre-service teachers from NC State would be involved also.

Robeson and Northampton Counties SE/NE (LR/PD/PS-Awarded 5/95-$150,000; Renewed 6/96-$200,000)=$350,000
Contact: Barbara Britt, Director of School Improvement, 910-671-6000 ext. 263

Robeson & Northampton schools in cooperation with Chowan College, Pembroke State University and ECU will use technology and professional development activities to target improved student performance activities. They will include staff development in using an Instructional Management system tied to the Internet. Professionals from schools and IHEs will develop and share activities, strategies and lesson plans tied to SCS objectives.

Reading/Math ABC's

Anson SW (LR-Awarded 5/95-$75,000; Renewed 6/96-$75,000; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$75,000)=$295,500
Contact: Frances G. Williamson, PK-8 Coordinator, 704-694-7479

The overall focus of this grant is to significantly improve local student performance on ABCs assessment and goals by enhancing and expanding current school improvement in the Reading-Math Teacher-Tutor Initiative. It targets low-achievers in grades 1-6 using the Success For All model.

Halifax NE (LR/PD-Awarded 5/95-$75,000; Renewed 7/96-$30,000; New Award 10/97-$75,000)=$175,000
Contact: Stanley Edwards, Asst. Super., Auxiliary Services, 919-583-5111

In order to help students overcome isolation and poverty, the grant will provide a bus for use in providing a variety of student field experiences. The expected outcomes of this "Education on Wheels" venture are improved self-esteem and higher aspirations for career and education.

New Award

- **Video Conference Room for Cyber Campus**

This cyber campus initiative will serve to meet the professional development and technology training needs of teachers, in collaboration with the NC School of Math & Science and the Educational Future Center.

Reading/Math ABC's Cont'd.

Swain W (LR-Awarded 5/95-$74,793; Renewed 6/96-$75,000) =$149,793
Contact: Sue Schneider, Director of Instruction, 704-488-3129

Swain County seeks to improve student achievement to the area of mathematics K-12. Swain County proposes a variety of strategies to improve End-of Grade and End-of-Course test scores

Tyrrell, Gates, Camden, Currituck, and Elizabeth City/Pasquotank Counties NE (LR/PD-Awarded 5/95-$149,938; Renewed 7/96-$150,000)=$299,938
Contact: Bob Cullen, Box 368, Camden NC 27921, 919-335-3426 or 919-336-2230

This consortium will create Algebra Readiness Through Environment Studies (ARTES). ARTES is a systematic initiative to enhance and support student learning and success through better instruction and technology. Focus will be on Algebra and critical thinking skills through more effective engagement and interconnections between students, teachers, participants in partner schools, and the world.

Wilson R (PD-Awarded 5/95-$75,000; Renewed 6/96-$75,000; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$75,000)=$295,500
Contact: Rachel Cozart, Executive Director, Elementary Education, 919-399-7788

Wilson will target literacy needs in grades 3-8 in a low performing school by helping teachers to become more effective in teaching all students to read and write. Strategies include the Reading Recovery program.

Professional Development

Cleveland County, Kings Mountain City, and Shelby City SW (LR/PD-Awarded 5/95-$120,480; Renewed 6/96-$200,000; Renewed 6/97-$188,000; Boosted 10/97-$25,000)=$533,480
Contact: Dr. Ron Nanney, Associate Superintendent, 704-487-8581

This proposal is a collaborative effort of Cleveland, Kings Mountain & Shelby City Schools, and Cleveland Community College, to address a variety of identified needs within their schools. Designed to meet the needs of individual students and groups of students, the proposal is also intended to meet individual staff development needs of teachers as they focus on student success and learning.

Winston-Salem/Forsyth NW (LR/PD/PS- Awarded 5/95-$60,945; Renewed 6/96-$60,945; New Award 10/97-$75,000)=$196,890
Contact: Trish Gainey, 910-727-2816

This proposal is focused on the urgent learning needs of functionally disadvantaged middle school students. The goal of this proposal is to create a model, on-site learning laboratory to train pre-service and in-service teachers in alternative teaching strategies.

Professional Development Continued

Winston-Salem/Forsyth Continued

New Award

- **Implementation of Career Senior Projects**

The goal of this initiative is to implement the career senior project component of the system's graduation requirements, including career exploration components and community service.

Early Childhood

Lexington City, Davidson County, and Thomasville City NW (LR/PD-Awarded 5/95-$150,000; Renewed 6/96-$200,000)=$350,000
Contact: Dr. Larry Burwell, Technology Coordinator, 704-242-1527

This project will focus on early-childhood reading readiness, family referral services through Smart Start, and a technology training program impacting upon K-5 reading and math performance scores.

Pamlico SE (LR/PD-Awarded 5/95-$73,898; Renewed 6/96-$75,000; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$75,000)=$294,398
Contact: Hazel Alcock, School Community Relations Coordinator, 919-745-4171

The C.A.R.E. Mobile uses a renovated mobile unit to reach targeted families throughout the county. It provides a stimulating community-based learning environment for children ages 0-4 years old as well as positive parenting programs. It serves as a mobile family resource center that collaborates with and coordinates other local service agencies in providing special information and multiple community agency services to children and parents. Its goal is to develop readiness skills for kindergarten. Services are delivered out of the mobile unit and in selected community sites visited by the unit.

Technology

Bertie NE (LR-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96- $70,500; New Award 10/97-$75,000)= $220,500.
Contact: Sue Fairless, Assistant Superintendent, 919-794-3173

This grant will expand intensive professional development and increase the integration of technology in instruction, as part of supplementing and complementing present restructuring activities. Through a cascading effect, grant funds will further the systemic effort and will result in something different and better for the students in our school system.

New Award

- **Expansion of A+ Program**

Contact: Ethel Godard, Asst. Superintendent, 919-794-3163

This initiative will expand the A+ program in the county, especially in elementary schools. It will utilize a thematic integrated A+ instruction and Multiple Intelligences strategies, develop and implement performance assessment tasks to measure student competencies, use student portfolios, and expand teacher training for A+ instruction.

Caswell R (LR-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96- $70,500; New Award 10/97-$75,000=$220,500
Contact: Kitty Blackwell, Director Title 1, 910-694-4116

This effort seeks to provide innovative instructional techniques through technology at Stoney Creek and South Schools as part of a local improvement plant to increase student achievement. It will furnish teachers, students, parents, and communities with additional resources to improve academic achievement in reading, writing, and social studies. These include books to support the Accelerated Reader program, technology, telecommunications, and extended library hours.

New Award

- **Great Expectations**

Great Expectations focuses on reading, and aims to improve attitudes, achievements, and create lifelong readers and learners. It targets low achieving ninth graders and utilizes the Individualized Instruction Center to provide services based on students' assessed needs. It incorporates parent involvement for reading.

Cumberland SE (LR-Awarded 10/95-$74,631; Renewed 11/96- $70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97- $74,994)=$290,625
Contact: Donna Weeks, Elementary Director, 910-678-2339

This grant will create a team at the middle school level to pilot an instructional technology program. The team will be trained to train colleagues. Quality instruction should lead to higher scores on the eighth grade technology computer assessment.

Technology Continued

Cumberland (Continued)

New Award

- **High Student Achievement: Straight by Eight**

Cumberland's program will provide intensive direct instructional assistance for four low-performing elementary schools to help children in K-3 to experience early success in learning so they can achieve Level III proficiency by age 8.

Dare NE (LR-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96- $70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$70,000)=$286,000
Contact: Eugene Gallelli, Assistant Superintendent, 919-473-1151

This proposal is an instructional component to complement Dare's Technology Plan for eight (8) schools and 325 certified teachers and support staff. The single guiding goal of this proposal is to integrate technology into the culture of each of the schools to the extent that integration results in greater student achievement and moves the school system closer to achieving selected national goals.

New Award

- **Extended Day Program**

This initiative focuses on Limited English Proficiency students and current and imminent dropouts through an extended day secondary program.

Hickory City, Catawba NW (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$149,995; Renewed 11/96- $141,000; Renewed 6/97-$141,000)=$431,995
Contact: Dr. Duane Kirkman, Associate Superintendent, 704-322-2855

The Catawba County Tech TraC (Technology Training Consortium) will provide a twenty-first century technology training program for teachers to maximize the use of technology and expand opportunities to learn for students.

Martin NE (PD- Year 1- Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96- $70,500; New Award 10/97-$75,00)=$220,500
Contact: Barbara Hardison, Director of Instruction, 919-792-1575

This grant will provide staff development to teachers in grades 6-12 to make technology an integrated instructional tool for increasing students' achievement. As a result, the students will employ inquiry, collaboration, technological and problem-solving skills to achieve the proposed outcomes.

New Award

- **Martin's New Model for Professional Development**
  Contact: Vicki Peel, Director, 919-792-1965

This initiative recognizes the need for change through developing high quality, sustained professional development that will translate into student learning. Focus will be on training eighth grade teachers in performance assessment and constructivism, and use of differentiated supervision strategies.

Technology Continued

Rockingham R (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; New Award 10/97-$75,000)=$220,500
Contact: Joye Latta, Director of Media and Technology, 910-627-2648

The goal of this grant is to develop and implement a technology training program for Rockingham's middle and high school teachers to improve and change their approach to teaching and learning.

New Award

- **(SPACE) Student Progress Through Academic & Computer Enrichment**

SPACE is an after-school tutorial program created to motivate, remediate, and accelerate low performing at-risk students at a technology magnet school. Focus will be on reading, writing and math in grades 3-5.

Professional Development

Bladen SE (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500)=$145,500
Contact: Dr. Margaret Lawrence, Grants Officer, 910-862-4136

In collaboration with Pembroke State University, Fayetteville State University, and University of North Carolina at Wilmington, this initiative will develop a cadre of math/science specialists prepared to offer teachers assistance as they integrate technology into math and science instruction. Twenty-four K-6 teachers, eight middle school teachers and six high school teachers (in multiples of two) will be trained as "trainers" or teacher leaders in technology. The in-service will consist of 50 hours of initial training and 10 hours of follow-up training.

Duplin SE (PD-Awarded 10/95-$58,143; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; New Award 10/97-$75,000)= $203,643
Contact: Tommy Benson, 910-296-1521

This collaborative partnership with the University of North Carolina at Wilmington will focus on the professional development of teachers and principals, the content and quality of teacher preparation, curricular/instructional change and school reform. The Model Clinical Teaching Project, a component of the Professional Development Systems Agreement, emphasizes the professional development of pre-service, tenured teachers, and administrators through education in developmental/clinical supervision, research related to the identification of the best curriculum and instructional practices, and collaborative support.

New Award

- **Duplin's Learning Journey: National Board Certification for Excellent Schools**

Duplin's initiative seeks to encourage teachers to seek National Board certification in support of teacher excellence. Certified teachers will then serve as peer reviewers in the system to help develop teacher capacity for school reform.

Professional Development Continued

Guilford R (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500)=$145,500
Contact: Garrett Tomlinson, 910-370-8359

This initiative will provide teachers with a more sophisticated understanding of content and to link that understanding with the development of effective pedagogical methods in the elementary and middle grades science and mathematics classrooms. The project will provide structured research internships for both in-service teachers and pre-service students in elementary- and middle-grades education.

Iredell-Statesville NW (PD-Awarded 10/95-$37,000; Renewed 11/96-$34,780; New Award 10/97-$75,000)=$146,780
Contact: Rebecca Kirkman/Barry Shepherd, 704-873-9432

This grant will support the Schools Attuned project at Statesville Middle School and East Iredell Middle School. This project enables teachers to become more effective with students who have difficulty keeping pace with the increasing demands of schools. As a result of more "attuned" teachers, students are enabled to develop greater insights into their own learning, with a focused knowledge of their strengths.

New Award

- **Teachers' Voices**

This initiative will develop caring competent teachers to help students in low performing elementary schools. Focus will include active learning for cultural enrichment, use of multiple means for assessing student performance, and providing resources for professional learning.

Johnston R (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; New Award 10/97-$75,000)=$220,500
Contact: Vann Langston, Assistant Superintendent 919-934-6031

Through this program, Johnston County seeks to accomplish two goals: The transformation of its teaching force by training each teacher and principal in The Dimensions of Learning by Marzano, and providing systemic and local school atmosphere that will best support dramatic change in the way teachers teach students. The transformation of Johnston's students will take place by training each student to understand the actual processes involved in acquiring, integrating, extending, refining, and using information meaningfully.

New Award

- **Choices**
  Contact: Vicky Temple-Rains, Principal, 919-202-0116

Choices is a schoolwide multi-pronged behavior management initiative to help students assume greater responsibility and accountability for their academic performance and social behavior. Strategies include parent and community involvement, integration of the Dimensions of Learning model, and Saturday instruction.

Professional Development Continued

Johnston, Wayne, Northampton R (PD-Awarded 10/95-$200,000; Renewed 11/96-$188,000; Renewed 6/97-$188,000)=$576,000
Contact: Joyce Wade, Assistant Superintendent, 919-934-6031

In order to achieve higher student performance, this grant will support the implementation of peer coaching in three school systems and one School of Education in the university system. The initiative will enhance the professionalization of teaching, giving teachers a sense of ownership and control as schools continue to change and evolve.

Madison W (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$69,812)=$285,812
Contact: Ann Melton, 704-649-9276

The purpose of this grant is to provide and support continuing professional development activities for administrators, teachers and support staff to increase student learning by training a cadre of local personnel to be staff development leaders. In focusing on high student performance, teachers will develop performance assessments for math in grades 3-8. Grades 4-5 will focus on remedial reading. Reading programs using technology will be implemented in middle and high schools.

Nash-Rocky Mount R (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$73,519; Renewed 11/96- $69,650; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$70,870)=$284,539
Contact: Susan Lamar, Program Specialist, 919-459-5360

This effort will offer intensive staff development for all educators in order to implement a comprehensive plan to expand enrichment opportunities and improve academic achievement for all students. Training will prepare teachers to differentiate curriculum to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of children; to integrate the teaching of thinking skills into the Standard Course of Study, and to discover, identify, and nurture potential in all students with special emphasis on minorities at low-performing schools.

Onslow SE (PD-Awarded 10/97-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$70,500)=$286,500
Contact: C. J. Korenek, 910-455-2211
Don Herring, Vocational Director, 910-455-0376

The purpose of the C-NOTES program (Collaborative Networking of Outstanding Teacher Education Services), in collaboration with Coastal Carolina Community College is to implement a comprehensive professional development program for current and future Onslow school employees. A major strategy is TQE training for staff.

Scotland SE (PD-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$70,398)=$286,398
Contact: Ann Crabbe, 910-276-1138

The goal of this initiative is to train teachers with skills and knowledge needed to prepare their students with the skills needed for successful employment in high-

Professional Development Continued

Scotland (Continued)

performance businesses and industries, through active learning as the primary method of instruction. Strategies include active learning workshops and development and use of a Ropes Course for the teaching of teamwork and workplace skills.

Wake R (PD- Awarded 10/95-$73,236; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$75,000)=$289,236
Contact: Geraldine Ritter, 919-850-1753

The project aims to prevent violence and to increase the rate of student success in school. It offers intervention strategies to ensure that all students have a fair opportunity to learn. The goal of this project is to train teachers to implement a model based in learning style theory, resiliency theory and technology. The model identifies at-risk children through multidisciplinary collaborative school based Student Support Teams (SST), and nurtures and teaches the resiliency factors--problem-solving skills, empathy, positive family relations, good reading, and good self-concept.

Yancey W (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96- $70,000; New Award 10/97-$75,000)=$220,000
Contact: Dr. Iva Nell Buckner, Assistant Superintendent, 704-682-6101

The Yancey County Schools will establish and fully equip a Professional Development Center. This center will allow for teams of teachers, assistants, principals and other school staff and parents, volunteers, community and business person to have a learning organization where they can acquire new knowledge, where they can work together collectively to help solve problems, and help each other.

New Award

- **Project Connection: Bringing Schools & Communities Together**

Yancey will focus on connecting schools and communities to foster community involvement through the education foundation, community forums, and award of mini-grants.

Reading/ ABC's

Burke NW (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95- $70,000; Renewed 11/96- $65,735.55; Renewed 6/97-$65,736=$201,471; Boosted 10/97- $75,000)=$276,471
Contact: Maurine Huffman, Director of Education, 704-437-4482
Betty A. Terrell, 704-439-4337

This proposal focuses on the professional development of all K-8 classroom teachers and principals in the area of reading. It will provide a repertoire of methods, reading instruction and content strategies, and use on-site literacy specialists, demonstration lessons and data driven interventions. The initiative targets ESL and low performing students.

Carteret SE (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96- $70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$75,000)=$291,000
Contact: Richard Rogers, Special Programs Coordinator, 919-728-4583

Carteret proposes to use the Kenan Institute's A+ model in order to improve student achievement. With an arts-centered curriculum, this model integrates the academics with dance, music, drama, and visual arts. Community partnerships and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences will be emphasized. Also, this initiative will use technology for combining daily arts instruction with interdisciplinary teaching to enhance the thematic approach critical to A+ schools.

Edgecombe NE (LR-Awarded 10/95-$74,788. Did not reapply for funding for 1996/97)=$74,788
Contact: Joyce Edwards, Assistant Superintendent, 910-641-2669

The overall purpose of this plan is to implement a systematic literature-based writing program in Edgecombe's high schools to develop writing competency.

Hertford NE (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$74,050; Renewed 1/97- $18,000)= $144,050
Contact: Dr. James Robinson 919-358-1761; Sheila Frizzell, 919-332-2588

This initiative will support the use of innovative literacy-based teaching strategies to help students realize success every day, and to promote a feeling of self-worth and importance. A specific focus is language and reading skills for the targeted population of black males at Ahoskie Graded School.

Lenoir SE (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$74,620; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)=$215,620
Contact: Kathryn Pittman, Assistant Superintendent, 919-527-7474

The major goal of this proposal is to accelerate the rate of learning of each student in grades 3-9 with special emphasis on those students who are achieving below grade level standards. Rigorous standards and higher expectations will be emphasized.

Reading/ ABC's Continued

Mitchell W (LR-Awarded 10/95- $75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)=$216,000
Contact: William Sears, Assistant Superintendent, 704-688-4432

The purpose of this grant is to improve the reading skills and attitudes of all Mitchell High School students who are identified as reading below grade level. Also, this plan will provide educators an opportunity to improve their professional skills through participation in a system-wide strategy .

Montgomery SW (LR-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)=$216,000
Contact: Dr. Georgia Adams, Assistant Superintendent, 910-576-6511

This project's focus is on the mastery of basic reading, writing, and communication skills in grades K-3. This focus on early achievement of basic skills would eventually impact on all students. This grant will also support learning for at-risk and low-performing students in an alternative school setting.

Mooresville NW (LR-Awarded 10/95-$72,500; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$70,500)=$284,000
Contact: Carol Carroll, Supervisor K-8, 704-664-5553

The focus of this grant is teacher training in grades 4-8, including implementation of assessments to measure student progress over time. Teachers will learn about curriculum planning, pre- and post assessment, and will use diagnostic information for planning, grouping and reteaching. A common data bank to provide continuous assessment will be developed.

Newton-Conover NW (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500); New Award 10/97-$75,000)=$220,500
Contact: Melanie Reid, Director of Student Services, 704-464-3191

This grant will implement and evaluate MILE (Multiple Intelligences Learning Enhancement) -- a multi-faceted curriculum delivery program designed to focus on the learning styles/multiple intelligences and individual needs of students at the high school.

New Award

- **Meeting Teachers' Needs at Career Phase/Stages**

Newton-Conover will plan, write, and deliver a program model that focuses on teacher needs at different career phases: novice teacher, mid-career teacher, and master teacher. Parent and community involvement are also included.

Reading/ ABCs Continued

Perquimans NE (LR-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$30,000; New Award 10/97-$75,000)= $180,000
Contact: Jeanie Umphlett, Student Alternative Services Coordinator, 919-426-5741

Perquimans County will focus on enhancing the performance of all Algebra I students currently testing below proficiency on the NC End-of-Course Test to help them meet the requirements for graduation in the Performance-Based Accountability Plan. Strategies include the creation of a technologically centered learning environment, staff development for teachers, and extended day (seventh period) remediation classes.

New Award

- **WingSpan: A TQE Initiative**

A major goal of WingSpan is to gather comprehensive information on student performance, school environment, staff, resources and community so as to implement an integrated management system for improving student performance.

Pitt NE (LR-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)=$216,000
Contact: Emmy Whitehead, Coordinator of Arts Education, 919-830-4295

The overall goal of this project is to improve student achievement by increasing teachers' skills in using the arts as the vehicle for multidisciplinary thematic instruction. Teachers will individualize and integrate instruction using multiple intelligences, technology, and connected learning experiences.

Polk R (LR-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)=$216,000
Contact: Kathy Tuten, Director of Curriculum 704-894-3051

The purpose of this program is to increase the level of technology literacy of our third-, fourth-, and seventh grade teachers. The goal is for teachers to use various forms of technology constructively and productively within the classroom to assist in the teaching of reading and writing.

Richmond SW (PD-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500); Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$75,000)=$291,000
Contact: Yvonne Jordan and Kathi Gibson, Directors of Instruction 910-582-5860

This project offers an opportunity to train English teachers in aligning curriculum, instruction, technology, assessment and workplace skills to raise student performance levels. It fosters teamwork, and provides time for teachers to become familiar with new approaches and the opportunity to network with others as they assess their needs and become proficient in changing the way they teach. Richmond will also focus on improving student performance in math in grades 4-7. It will provide training to improve the content knowledge and instructional skills of the current math staff, including the use of technology.

Reading/ ABC's Continued

Surry, Mt. Airy, Elkin NW (ABC/LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$200,000; Awarded 2/96-$50,000; Renewed 11/96- $188,000; Renewed 6/97-$188,000)=$626,000
Contact: Linda Tesh, 910-386-8211; Diane Swaim (Elkin), 910-835-3135
Janice Sherrill (Mt. Airy), 910-786-8355

Funds from this grant will enable the collaborating systems (Surry, Elkin City and Mt. Airy) to expand current reform efforts by training teachers in application strategies targeted for at-risk students, adding application strategies to all classroom instruction, and increasing the effective use of technology as routine tools for instruction.

TQE

Granville R (LR-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)=$216,000
Contact: Ernest Bibby, Secondary Consultant, 919-693-4613

This initiative will use TQE principles to secure and sustain broad-based collaboration, to develop a system that is more efficient and that greatly improves and enhances the total educational experience for all students in the system.

Alternative Learning/ At-Risk

Henderson W (LR-Awarded 10/95-$64,553; Renewed 11/96-$60,931)= $125,484
Contact: Bill Sink, 704-697-4516

Henderson proposes to establish a partnership with the home, community agencies and the base school to increase the graduation rate and reduce the dropout rate of students enrolled at Tuxedo Extended Day School (TEDS). TEDS was established during the 1994-95 school year to provide an alternative educational setting for the highest at-risk students in grades six through twelve and to allow them to "catch up" and progress toward graduation.

Kannapolis City SW (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$74,900; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$70,500)=$286,400
Contact: Chip Buckwell, Director of Student Services, 704-938-1131

This grant seeks to enhance the current Second Chance Program to address the needs of dropouts, potential dropouts, pregnant/parenting teens, and students unable to function in a regular class. Focus is on developing a school-family-community partnership to address the behavioral and transition needs of ninth grade students. Job shadowing and vocational strategies are included. It also seeks to establish a model training center to provide ongoing, on-site staff development opportunities for faculty and to improve teaching/learning environments for academic success.

Alternative Learning/ At-Risk Continued

Sampson, Clinton City SE (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$150,000; Renewed 11/96-$141,000; Renewed 6/97-$141,000; Boosted 10/97-$10,000)=$442,000
Contact: Glenda Honeycutt, 910-592-1401

This program is an alternative school targeting grades 8-12 students who are juvenile offenders, teen parents, suspended students, and low functioning students. Strategies include case management, and coordinated services such as psychological and health services, peer mediation, violence prevention and sex education. Extensive use of community resources and technology will be included.

Early Childhood

Beaufort NE (LR-Awarded 10/95-$73,400; Renewed 11/96-$69,500; New Award 10/97-$75,000)= $217,900
Contact: John Smith, 919-946-6593

This grant seeks funding to enhance the early literacy experiences of pre-school children by developing a Pilot Early Intervention Center at Eastern Elementary School in the Washington area. The center will target disadvantaged delayed children from birth to kindergarten enrollment. A collaborative effort will be made to educate the parents about the importance of literacy and their role in early literacy experiences. Services will include delivering printed materials to the home.

New Award

- **Reading/Writing in a Technology Enriched Environment**

Beaufort's initiative is designed to train teachers in grades K-2 to teach reading and writing through the Language Experience Approach in a technology-enriched environment. It will motivate students to become independent readers, and bring collaboration with other reading and writing professionals to enhance teaching performance.

Edenton-Chowan NE (PD-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$57,600; New Award-$75,000)=$207,600
Contact: Judith Johnson, Instructional Specialist, 919-482-4486

This grant will provide the framework to bring those involved in the care and education of three-, four-, and five-year olds together to establish themselves as a group of professionals acting in concert for children. Initial and on-going training will ensure a common understanding of developmental stages and internalization of developmentally appropriate activities and instruction so that more children entering kindergarten are ready to learn and experience a problem-free transition.

New Award

- **Professional Development for High Student Performance**

This proposal will increase student performance through a specific academic intervention model that enhances student motivation, increases teacher expertise, and promotes the teacher as decision-maker. Strategies include differentiated supervision, mentors, and literacy training.

Early Childhood Continued

Haywood W (LR-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$75,000)=$291,000
Contact: Fred Trantham, 704-456-2400

This initiative is a pre-kindergarten preparatory program designed to enable all Haywood County children to start school ready to learn at a developmentally appropriate level.

New Award

- **Restructuring Remediation in the Upper Elementary Grades**

The focus of this grant is achieving high student performance by restructuring remediation in grades 3-5 with emphasis on reading, writing, and math skills. Strategies include accelerated learning, parental involvement and student accountability plans.

Jones SE (LR/PD/PS-Awarded 10/95-$74,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97)=$216,000
Contact: Mary Thomas 919-448-2531 Ext. 18

The ABC (A Bonding Community) Outreach Coordination Project is a collaborative effort primarily between the Jones County Schools and the Jones County Partnership for Children (Smart Start). The project Outreach Coordinator will work with JCPC Childcare Resource and Referral Counselors to facilitate the establishment of cooperative play groups in each neighborhood. These groups will meet in neighborhood buildings or churches, serving children ages 2-3 and their parents or grandparents. This proposal also includes training for leadership teams in using data driven interventions for planning and school reform, and mentoring of school leaders.

Moore SW (LR/PD/PS-Awarded 10/95-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$70,500; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)=$216,000
Contact: Dr. Lorna Clack, Director of Instruction K-5/Gail Hicks, 910-947-2976

The broad goal of this program model is to create a culture of cooperation between the home and school environments conducive to optimal school achievement, to maximize learning and potential for children ages 4-7 in three target locations in Moore County. This will be demonstrated by administrators, teachers, teacher assistants, parents, and childcare providers who are able to provide developmentally appropriate and literacy-based environments and practices for their children.

New Hanover SE (LR/PD-Awarded 10/95-$66,819; Renewed 11/96-$62,038; Renewed 6/97-$62,038)=$190,895
Contact: Alfred Lerch, Exec. Dir, Student Support Services, 910 763-5431 ext. 206

New Hanover County Schools plan to systematically change teacher attitudes and interactions with a specific group of targeted at-risk students through focused on-site staff development. The targeted students are in K-1 and exhibit the emotional scars of abuse, neglect and an unstable home life.

North Carolina School Improvement Grants
Awarded February 1996

Technology

Bertie, Hertford, Warren, Weldon City NE (PD-Awarded 2/96-$100,000)= $100,000
Contact: Dr. Shirley Turnage, Educational Specialist, 919-335-3125/3225

The Roanoke River Valley Consortium via Project Connect is seeking to refine its infrastructure to institutionalize a distance learning program. This would enhance teaching and learning through collaborative efforts by leveraging limited resources to provide high quality professional development activities and by overcoming the barriers of time and distance

Community Involvement

Cleveland SW (LR-Awarded 2/96-$75,000; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)=$145,500
Contact: Bill McCullough, Director of Student Services, 704-487-8581

Cleveland County Schools in partnership with Cleveland County Communities in Schools proposes to build a comprehensive program in two middle schools which will develop and strengthen the bonds between the school and home. The Parent and Student Support Program will provide a vehicle for students and families to become partners in decisions which will affect the school climate and delivery of services.

Alternative Learning/ At-Risk

Durham R (ABC-Awarded 2/96-$40,879)=$40,879
Contact: Dr. Alan Teasley, Grants Administrator, 919-560-2029

This proposal is designed to provide extra help for African American students in grades K-3, who are two to three years below grade level. Students will receive six to eight hours of extra instruction each week.

Character Education

Graham W (LR-Awarded 2/96-$53,190; Renewed 6/97-$53,190)=$106,380
Contact: Rick Davis, Assistant Superintendent, 704-479-3413

This grant will initiate a systemwide PreK-12 character education program for its students, teachers, staff and families. The character education program training will consist of two components: school training and community/parent training.

Professional Development

McDowell, Rowan-Salisbury NW (TP-Awarded 2/96-$100,000-2/96; Renewed 6/97-$94,000)=$194,000
Contact: Sarah Pratt, Educator-in Residence, 704-652-9840

McDowell and Rowan-Salisbury Schools will join with local Institutions of Higher Education in a project that will expand and refine the Performance-Based Licensure pilot and staff development models for initially licensed teachers and their mentors.

Professional Development Continued

Onslow, Pender SE (PD/PS-Awarded 2/96-$116,000; Renewed 6/97-$109,040)=$225,040
Contact: Beckie Collins, Director of Personnel, 910-455-2211

Key resource specialists from Onslow and Pender Schools and the Consortium for the Advancement of Public Education will provide training to student interns from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and their assigned cooperating teachers during the summer of 1996. This training will focus on the standards for beginning teachers developed by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment Support Consortium and a performance-based assessment process.

Reading/ ABC's

Watauga NW (ABC-Awarded 2/96-$74,996-2/96; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$71,006)=$216,502
Contact: Carol Deal, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction 704-264-7190; Bricca Sweet, Grants Officer, 704-264-7190

Watauga County plans to improve their approach to reading instruction systemwide, particularly for the at-risk primary students. This will be done by using the First Step Plus Reading Adjustment Mentoring Program, a professional development model. The LEAP UP PLUS addition (Learning Early & Progressing Upward Performance PLUS) will reinforce and extend a series of reading improvements through staff development in mentoring, and differentiated strategies for grades 4-5 teachers. Other strategies are data analysis involving teachers as researchers, connecting classes and employers, and use of volunteers and mentors.

Weldon City NE (PD-Awarded 2/96-$75,000; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)=$145,500
Contact: Debra Lanham, Personnel Director, 919-536-4821

This proposal will allow Weldon City Schools to integrate technology into the 3rd grade, improve teacher reading instruction skills, and decrease future drop-out rates. The staff development provided will enable teachers at one elementary school to earn advanced degrees in reading.

Winston Salem/ Forsyth, Guilford NW (ABC-Awarded 2/96-$100,000; Renewed 6/97-$94,000)=$194,000
Contact: 910-727-2292

The proposed program will serve students in two elementary schools and one middle school. The program seeks to improve student performance in reading and writing through integration of technology and the arts into the curriculum and the involvement of all students.

North Carolina School Improvement Grants
Awarded March 1996

Professional Development

Burlington City Schools and Alamance County R (PD-Awarded 3/96-$150,000)=$150,000
Contact: Debbie Hill, Exec. Dir. Personnel Services, 910-570-6060

This consortium will provide support for school-level, collaborative professional development teams that will address the needs of beginning and career teachers. The goal of this proposal is to increase students achievement through increased educator collaboration and retention of quality teachers.

Cabarrus County Schools SW (PD-Awarded 3/96-$75,000)=$75,000
Contact: Dr. Katherine Rogers, Assistant Superintendent, 704-786-6195

A specific goal of this system is to have 80% of the targeted to meet or exceed state standards in reading and math by the end of the grant period. Specifically, the grant addresses professional development needs of a cadre of both new and experienced teachers. It will train teachers to have a clear understanding of "student diversity" and to understand and use a variety of teaching/learning process for all students.

Cleveland County Schools SW (PD-Awarded 3/96-$75,000; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)=$145,500
Contact: Bill McCullough, Director of Student Services, 704-487-8581

Cleveland Schools, in partnership with Cleveland County Communities in Schools proposes to build a comprehensive program in two middle schools which will develop and strengthen the bonds between the school and home. The Parent and Student Support Program will provide a vehicle for students and families to become partners in decisions which affect the school climate and services delivery.

Rowan-Salisbury School System SW (LR-Year 1-$74,619-3/96; Renewed 6/97-$70,500)=$145,119
Contact: Doug Eury, 704-636-6750

This proposal is to support implementation of the new Quality Curriculum for the 21st Century (commonly referred to as the Class of 1999 Plan). The successful implementation of the Quality Curriculum will require the "buy-in" and involvement from parents, students, teachers, community leaders, and employees.

Reading/ ABC's

Northampton NE (PD-Awarded 3/96-$75,000; Renewed 11/96-$34,500)=$109,500
Contact: Brenda Roberts 919-534-1371

In this project, teachers will use 20 days of their contracted teaching time to study the philosophy and content of the revised NC Science curriculum and to plan effective methods for teaching the curriculum, including the development of Northampton County Science Instruction Guides. These teachers will be named Lead Science Teachers. They will be science resource teachers in their schools, who will be expected to influence schoolwide reform in the way science is taught and learned.

Transylvania County Schools W (LR-Awarded 3/96-$62,000) =$62,000
Contact: Bo Williams, Dir. of Support Services 704-884-6173

This grant seeks to enhance a second language program for students in grades 1-8 through distance leaning opportunities.

Union County Schools SW (LR-Awarded 3/96-$75,000; Renewed 6/97-$70,500; Boosted 10/97-$70,500)=$216,000
Contact: Trudy Griffin, Dir. Elem. Ed. 704- 283-3733; Ms. W. B. Colson, Principal 704-296-3110 East Elem., 515 Elizabeth Ave. Monroe, NC 28112-5018; Dr. Robert Shaw, Wingate Univ., Wingate, NC 28174 704-233-8000

The TIPS initiative (Technology Involving Parents & Professionals with Students) will use technology enhanced instruction to improve the communication skills proficiency levels of all low-performing elementary students. TIPS will restructure the learning environment at the first grade level to better address the learning styles of these students.

KEY

LR- Local Reform
PD- Professional Development
PS- Pre-service Training
R- Raleigh Region
NE- North-east Region of State
NW- North-west Region of State
SE- South-east Region of State
W- Western Region of State
SE- South-east Region of State
SW- South-west Region of State
ABC- Grant related to state initiatives in ABCs

Special Statewide Model Development Consortium Awards November 1996-Year 3 Subgrants

Reading/ ABC's

Consortium: Cumberland Co. & 20 others (Awarded 11/96-$163,870; Renewed 10/97-$195,700)=$359,570
Contact: Ricky Lopes, Finance Officer, 910- 678-2300
Vincent Marron, Kenan Institute for the Arts, Box 10610, Winston-Salem, NC 27108, Phone-910-722-0030; Fax 910-722-0081

This initiative will continue its work to create a student performance assessment model to meet the needs of interdisciplinary instruction, based upon the experience and developing practice of teachers, specialists and administrators in existing A+ Schools. Data is being used to link assessment and classroom performance. Involvement of teachers in decision-making will continue to be fostered, and training will continue for schools in the A+ network.

Consortium: Nash-Rocky Mount, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Chapel Hill & Elizabeth City/Pasquotank (Awarded 11/97-$200,000; Renewed 10/97-$125,000)=$325,000
Contact: Reed Jackson, 919- 459-5220
Mary Anne Tharin, 919-715-1955

This consortium will continue to pilot the new state assessment system based on the work of the N. C. Education Standards & Accountability Commission. Focus is on authentic performance assessments in grades K-12.

Consortium: Weldon City/ Northampton Co. (Awarded 11/97-$174,200; Renewed 10/97-$149,200)=$323,400
Contact: Debra Lanham, Personnel Director, 919-536-4821

This initiative will enhance the consortium's first year's work to strengthen the CIS model by increasing achievement of students two or more years behind in grade progress, to address absenteeism and behavior problems affecting achievement, to provide for opportunities in apprenticeships, internships and job shadowing experiences, and to establish a literacy/GED programs for parents of Cities in Schools students.

TQE

Consortium: Granville Co. & 26 other systems (Awarded 11/96-$200,000; Renewed 10/97-$200,000)=$400,000
Contact: Janice Davis, Superintendent, 919-693-4613
Judy Phillips, 919-733-9159

This initiative will build on the work of the TQE Support Center focusing on collaboration among state level organizations involved in total quality efforts. The network of people and resources to serve TQE initiatives in schools will be sustained through the NC Partnership for excellence. Training in TQE will continue.

New Grants Awarded October 1997

KEY:

HSP- High Student Performance

QT- Quality Teachers, Administrators & Staff

SOS- Safe & Orderly Schools

EES- Effective & Efficient School Operations

Alexander/Mitchell Consortium (HSP, 10/97- $150,000)

- **MT-RAMP: Performance-based Reading & Math System**
  Contact: Robert Austin, Superintendent, 704-632-7001

This Mountain Technology, Reading and Math Partnership seeks to raise learning and achievement performance in reading, math and technology using a performance-based assessment system. It seeks to change attitudes towards reading and writing by building community awareness and using parent intervention strategies, and designs professional development based on performance-based outcomes.

Asheville City (QT, 10/97- $71,830)

- **R.E.A.D.E.R.S. Process**
  Contact: Carol P. Ray, 704-255-5304

R.E.A.D.E.R.S. is an on-going staff development process which supports teachers' efforts in assessing student weaknesses, and designs specific multi-sensory activities and materials for direct instruction and strategic teaching. This initiative targets low achieving students in K-5, using literacy teams for on-site support.

Avery (QT, 10/97- $75,000)

- **Project ABC (Avery's Better Chance)**
  Contact: Steve Sneed, 704-733-6006

Project ABC is an initiative to combat poor reading in Avery's schools. It is part of a comprehensive strategy to train teachers in use of assessment data to drive instructional strategies and utilize home-based reading and learning activities. Parent training and community inputs are essential elements of this program.

Brunswick (HSP, 10/97- $75,000)

- **Increasing Student Achievement Through Technology**
  Contact: Sandra G. Robinson, 910-457-5241

Brunswick's initiative is a technology based remediation program for the improvement of student performance in reading and math for students achieving at levels 1 & 2 in the middle school. The program uses The Jostens' Advantage software, after school tutoring and Saturday school, and on-site parent training in computers.

Buncombe (HSP, 10/97- $75,000)

- **Academic Intervention Model for Dropout Reduction**
  Contact: Audrey Hall, 704-255-5921

The dropout prevention model targets sixth grade at-risk students through an extended day mentoring/ tutoring program, use of technology in instruction, expansion of school-to-work programs, teacher training for working with at-risk, and parent involvement.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro/ Brunswick/ Durham/ Edgecombe/ Hyde/ Jones/ Rowan-Salisbury Cons. (EES, 10/97- $199,351)

- **NC Network For School Based Management**
  Contact: Neil G. Pederson, 919-967-8211

This initiative will provide training for school-based improvement teams within each partnering LEA in the network. It will focus on training staff for shared decision-making based on the needs of the districts and individual schools, including facilitative leadership, training of trainers and collaborative network sharing days.

Chatham (QT, 10/97- $73,895)

- **Teaching Best Practices with Best Practices**
  Contact: Mark MacAllister, 919-542-3626

Chatham's overall goal is to develop and pilot a program that will place a cohort of several first-year teachers (K-8) on a training and development model that combines instruction in effective practices and classroom technology methods. Mentors and trainers will model the best teaching practices, planning methods, and assessment approaches in their instruction.

Craven (EES, 10/97- $75,000)

- **Quality Schooling**
  Contact: Janet Furman, 919-514-6300

Craven's proposal is a continuous improvement initiative based on the TQE model. It emphasizes design and implementation of comprehensive training packages as a model for restructuring time for teachers to plan, synthesize, and apply their learning.

Cumberland/ Roberson/ Hoke/ Fayetteville & (Fayetteville State, Roberson CC, Fayetteville TCC) Cons. (HSP, 10/97- $200,000)

- **Seamless Educational Highway**
  Contact: Dr. Paris Jones, 910-678-2300

This initiative is a systems model to plan and design a Seamless Educational Highway to eliminate discontinuities in learning as students move from one level of schooling to another higher level. Teams from schools and higher education will develop plans to promote continuous student learning and the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities from preschool through university.

Currituck (SOS, 10/97- $75,000)

- **Safe & Orderly Schools: Fostering Resiliency**
  Contact: Julie Douglass, 919-232-2223

Currituck seeks to build a positive climate to improve academic and life success for all, with emphasis on building resiliency in students and teachers to make them more enthusiastic, motivated, and change-oriented. Strategies include character education, social skills, conflict resolution, community volunteers, careers, differentiated instruction, 'lunch buddies,' etc.

Davidson (HSP, 10/97- $75,000)

- **High Student Performance for Low Performing Schools**
  Contact: Nancy Nuckols, 910-249-8182

Davidson's initiative focuses on high student achievement in 3 low performing elementary schools. Strategies include portfolio assessment, an accountability monitoring system, early literacy intervention, and parental involvement.

Davie (QT, 10/97- $110,811)

- **Northwest Peer Coaching Cons.**
  Contact: Dr. William P. Sneed, 704-634-5921

This grant seeks to replicate the East Carolina University Peer Coaching Project to impact teacher performance and retention. The model provides for individual professional growth plans, the learning of new instructional techniques, and fostering of teacher collegiality.

Edenton-Chowan (HSP, 10/97- $75,000)

- **Professional Development for High Student Performance**
  Contact: Linda S. Perry, 919-482-4436

This proposal will increase student performance through a specific academic intervention model that enhances student motivation, increases teacher expertise, and promotes the teacher as decision-maker. Strategies include differentiated supervision, mentors, and literacy training.

Gaston (QT, 10/97- $70,771)

- **Learning Focused Framework & Lesson Plan Sampler**
  Contact: Brenda Ratchford, 704-866-6100

Gaston will focus this grant to restructure teaching practices from a "covering the material" approach to a learning-focused approach. A comprehensive instructional framework, curriculum maps, and lesson plans will be produced based on the Standard Course of Study.

Greene/ Jones/ Vance Cons. (HSP, 10/97- $200,000)

- **Teaching Reading in the Improvement Process**
  Contact: Steve Mazingo, 919-747-3425

This consortium seeks to assemble and utilize resources to build a collaborative network to energize and accelerate efforts in the teaching/ learning of reading in all elementary schools.

Hoke/ Anson/ Scotland & Sandhills Regional Education Cons. (HSP, 10/97- $184,925)

- **Extended Time Remediation**
  Contact: Barbara C. Lupo, 910-875-4106

The purpose of this initiative is to improve reading and math performance in five low-performing elementary schools. Strategies include extended day, inter-session interventions (in the year-round schools), and Saturday academies.

Hyde/ Camden/ Gates/ Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Cons. (HSP, 10/97- $154,000)

- **Mathematics Improvement Through Problem Solving (MIPS)**
  Contact: Dr. Ronald Montgomery, 919-926-3281

This consortium will use a reflective teaching model to change math instruction in K-8 to a problem/ inquiry based, integrated approach. Mentor teachers will work with teachers in implementing TeachStat and Connected Math.

Hyde/ Gates (HSP, 10/97- $150,000)

- **CPR-Community Projects for Reviving Learning in the Middle School**
  Contact: Dr. Ronald Montgomery, 919-926-3281

Students in grades 7-8 will identify community problems, then teams of students will research options for community based problem solving.

Lincoln (HSP, 10/97- $75,000)

- **What's a Parent to Do?**
  Contact: Dr. Martin Eaddy, 704-732-2261

Lincoln will raise student achievement by mobilizing hard to reach parents as well as energize the total community of parents, educators, business leaders, media, and support agencies using satellite and cable technologies to reach workplaces and homes.

Lincoln/ Asheville City/ Stokes (HSP, 10/97- $200,000)

- **From Math Proficiency to Writing and Beyond**
  Contact: Dr. Martin Eaddy, 704-732-2261

This consortium plans to address low performance in writing and math at the elementary and middle school levels. Schools will collaborate with each other within the district and across the district lines, exchanging ideas for facilitating better instruction. Strategies include training via satellite.

McDowell (QT, 10/97- $75,000)

- **FLAG - Fostering Leadership and Growth**
  Contact: Nancy Guthrie, 704-652-4535

FLAG is a staff development model that promotes professionalism among junior high school teachers and administrators. Teachers at the same grade/ content level will develop content-specific standards, and will receive leadership training.

Moore/ Anson/ Cumberland/ Harnett/ Hoke/ Montgomery/ Moore/ Richmond/ Robeson (HSP, 10/97- $197,500)

- **Student Improvement and Enrichment**
  Contact: Gene A. Riddle, Superintendent, 910-947-2976

This consortium will provide reading, writing and math training support to teachers in designated low performing K-8 schools. Strategies include using master teachers, the Comer model, parent centers, and enhancement of instructional leadership.

Pender (HSP, 10/97- $75,000)

- **Improving Instruction Through Technology**
  Contact: Thurman E. Lewis, Jr., 910-259-2187

The focus of this initiative is to support systemic change in customizing and implementing training packages on accessing and using instructional technology in the classroom on a routine basis. Pender's cyber campus will also be supported.

Roanoke Rapids Graded (QT, 10/97- $75,000)

- **Building Capacity for Student-Centered Learning**
  Contact: John Parker, 919-535-3111

The primary focus of this grant is to use curriculum analysis, authentic learning tasks, and seminar instruction to empower students to take an active role in "learning how to learn." Also, it will create a teacher training model using internal trainers and peer coaches, and involve community participation in schools.

Robeson (HSP, 10/97- $74,927)

- **Learning in Style - Integration in a High School That Works**
  Contact: Dr. Jo Ann Chavis Lowery, 910-738-4841

Robeson's goal is to create an integrated curriculum, provide peer tutoring in math and reading in grades 8-12, and to improve reading and writing across the curriculum within a learning styles framework. Strategies include creation of electronic portfolios, literacy initiatives, and mentoring.

Scotland/ Montgomery/ Hoke/ Richmond Cons. (QT, 10/97- $197,890)

- **Collaborative Leadership Academics**
  Contact: Dr. Anne B. Crabbe, 910-276-1138

This consortium will design and implement a training package for existing and emerging administrators to enable them to be more effective in implementing TQE in their schools. The cadre of trained administrators will train and support their teachers in creating total quality schools and classrooms.

Stanly (HSP, 10/97- $75,000)

- **Extended Learning Opportunities for High Student Achievement**
  Contact: Dr. Mary A. Adkins, 704-982-1148

In partnership with a local ministerial association and other community support, grant will focus on academic intervention strategies in reading and math using extended learning opportunities for grades 3-10 students not demonstrating grade/ subject level proficiency.

Vance/ Northampton/ Robeson & NCCAT Cons. (QT, 10/97- $200,000)

- **Connections: Support for Beginning Teachers & Mentors**
  Contact: Marty Smith, 919-492-2127

Connections is a video-conferencing network for producing quality teachers. This grant will provide support for beginning teachers to reduce their attrition rate and enhance mentoring programs in the participating schools.

Washington (EES, 10/97- $75,000)

- **Exploring Teaching & Learning (ETL)**
  Contact: May Hope Wilkins, 919-793-5171

ETL seeks to establish learning communities in the system including inservice training for teachers, administrators and parents; use of curriculum teams; TQE; and implementing best practices in reading and writing.

Wilkes/ Alexander/ Avery/ Caldwell & ASU, NWRESA
(10/97- $177,227)

- **Learning Focused School: A High Achievement, High Expectations, High Content Model**
  Contact: Linda Greene, 910-667-1121

The overriding goal of the Learning Focused Schools Project is to prepare school personnel collaboratively with each other and the broader school community to create learning focused school based on best practices with high content, high expectations, and high rates of learning for all.

Appendix C

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
ABOUT EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA
NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PANEL

The North Carolina School Improvement Panel was charged with framing a single plan for improving the public schools of North Carolina. How is the Panel going about its mission?

•Examining how existing reform initiatives mesh with one another.

•Deciding what the gaps are and how to fill them.

•Engaging the public in the process of improving public education.

What makes the School Improvement Panel different?

•It is the first public body charged with putting together a single, comprehensive plan for continuous improvement of public education.

•It acts like a magnet for other education initiatives, both existing and planned, to ensure that all efforts are moving toward the same goal.

•It has developed a process for sustaining the public input that is essential to improving public education.

How is the mission of the School Improvement Panel consistent with the State Board of Education's role in setting educational policy for the State of North Carolina?

•The Panel operates under the aegis of the State Board of Education and with the full support of Dr. Jay Robinson, the board's chairman.

•Lowell Thomas, chair of the School Improvement Panel, is a recent member of the State Board of Education. Two other current members of the SBE serve on the Panel.

•All of the Panel's recommendations will be subject to the state Board's approval.

THE NEW ABCs OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

By now, most of us probably know the A-B-C of The New ABCs stands for accountability, focus on the basics and local control. What is this program trying to accomplish?

•To chart the success -- or shortcomings -- of individual schools.

•To integrate a command of reading, writing and mathematics into all subjects.

•To put more decisions into the hands of local teachers, principals and parents.

How is this program different from other reform initiatives?

•Individual schools -- not school systems -- are accountable for student progress.

•Schools will measure a year's worth of growth for a year's worth of school.

•Schools are rewarded if their students achieve exemplary growth in any given year.

How old is the program, and where does it stand in schools across the state?

•Grades 3-8 in all 117 school systems began the program in the 1996-97 year.

•Grades 9-12 in all 117 school systems began the program in the 1997-98 year.

What are the results of the first year of implementation at the elementary and middle school levels?

•Elementary and middle school students at 32.4% of the schools (529 schools) met exemplary growth standards.

•Elementary and middle school students at 24.3% of the schools (397 schools) met at least the expected growth standards.

•Elementary and middle school students at 7.5% of the schools (122 schools) did not meet growth standards and were deemed low-performing by the State Board. Fifteen of the neediest schools were selected to work with assistance teams this year.

•Slightly over thirty-five percent of the schools received no recognition.

STANDARDS & ACCOUNTABILITY

The Standards & Accountability Commission was formed in 1993 to establish a rigorous, relevant education program for all students. The Commission submitted a report to the State Board of Education and a Committee on Standards and Accountability has been formed to advise the State Board of Education on student performance standards. How do these standards this fit with The New ABCs?

•The Commission wants individual students accountable for what they must learn.

•The New ABCs holds individual schools accountable for their students progress.

•Standards & Accountability complements The New ABCs.

The Standards & Accountability Commission believes that schools should measure students' real, demonstrated performance, and not promote them based on how much "seat time" they log in any year. What is the rationale for this belief?

•All students can learn at higher levels.

•Expectations of students must not only be high, but also consistent.

•Today's students need a higher level of education just to survive and compete in the 21st century.

The Standards & Accountability Commission wants measurable standards that have consequences yet are realistic enough that all students have an opportunity to achieve at higher levels. With that in mind, how would you characterize these standards?

•Specific -- defining exactly what content must be covered in every subject.

•Public -- so everyone would know what is expected of students.

•Rigorous -- because they must require real effort to improve student performance.

JOBREADY INITIATIVE

We all know the 21st century job market will be tough. The JobReady, an initiative of the Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness now under the Department of Commerce, is designed to help smooth the transition from high school to adult life and the workforce. What does JobReady do?

- Champions educational reform to provide all students with a strong foundation of academic and technical skills.

- Promotes awareness that students must be held to rigorous standards regardless of their plans after high school.

- Mobilizes communities to create partnerships linking public schools, community colleges, universities, parents and local businesses.

What are the underlying beliefs that guide the JobReady initiative?

- Schools should provide all students with comprehensive career guidance, starting in kindergarten and continuing through the community college level.

- Every student must have the chance to participate in at least one "work-based" learning experience before graduation.

- To succeed in the workforce of the future, all students will need some type of education or training after high school graduation.

How does it fit with The New ABCs and the Standards & Accountability Commission?

- Like the other two efforts, JobReady is an educational reform initiative, not a government jobs training program.

- Like The New ABCs, JobReady emphasizes command of basic skills and believes individual communities are best equipped to identify and address local needs.

- Like Standards & Accountability, JobReady calls for holding individual students accountable for meeting rigorous

standards that will enable them to be productive adults in the 21st century.

Appendix D

TALKING ABOUT EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT

The following sample speech may help you generate discussion about education improvement in your local civic clubs, community organizations or professional associations. Along with the video and copies of this handbook, which are available from the North Carolina School Improvement Panel, this speech provides an outline for a discussion on challenges facing our schools and possible solutions to them. We invite you to modify this working document to suit your style and the needs of your audience.

Welcome, and thank you all for taking time to join me today to discuss the very vital issue of public education improvement in North Carolina.

I don't think I need to impress the importance of public education upon any of you.

Your presence here shows that all of you are deeply concerned about the future of our children and the system that teaches them, socializes them and prepares them for the rest of their lives.

Public education in this country isn't just a right -- it's a necessity.

It's the chief means by which we instill our societal values and the importance of good citizenship in our children.

Public schools impart knowledge and provide skills training.

They foster an appreciation of history, ideas and culture.

And they do so according to one of the most basic tenets of our society: that all men and women are created equal.

We in this country have long subscribed to the notion that one people can be ably served by one system of public education.

And our faith in this system is well-founded: public schooling, after all, has produced the leaders who have made our nation the most prosperous and highly regarded in the world.

But as we approach the dawn of a new century, we have come to realize that schools must chart an ambitious new course if they are to keep up with a world that sometimes seems to be progressing faster than we are adapting.

The challenges that lie ahead are daunting:

•How do we ensure that North Carolina schools respond effectively to the demands of the Information Age?

•How can we produce students who are equipped not only to use existing technologies, but to spur the development of new ones?

•What can we do to make sure students have a solid command of basic skills while simultaneously giving them the tools they require to pursue specialized careers in industry, commerce or the public sector?

...and,

•How do we allow individual schools the freedom to implement programs that respond to their own students' needs while at the same time holding them accountable to state and national standards?

The North Carolina School Improvement Panel has been working under the direction of the State Board of Education to help answer these questions and to develop one focused, long-term plan for public education improvement.

The Panel has worked to unite the major reform efforts already under way to ensure that they all work toward the same goals -- providing all students with an education second to none, giving educators the tools to do their job, and engaging each community in a collaborative partnership for world-class schools.

With the strong alignment of Governor Hunt, the State Board of Education and State Superintendent Mike Ward, we were able to move quickly ahead

in this year alone -- with the Excellent Schools Act and Strategic Plan for Excellent Schools.

Our efforts are coming together in some of the following ways:

- The ABCs Plus: North Carolina's Strategic Plan for Excellent Schools — with four strategic priorities: high student performance, safe and orderly schools, quality teachers, administrators, and staff, and effective and efficient operation.

- The New ABCs of Public Education -- which emphasizes holding schools Accountable for performance, focusing on the Basics of reading, writing and math, and giving decision-making Control to local schools.

- The Education Standards & Accountability Committee -- which is working to implement high and clearly defined standards of what North Carolina students should know.

- The Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness and the JobReady Initiative -- which encourages work-based learning experiences for every student before graduating high school.

- The Excellent Schools Act — which will raise standards and accountability for teachers and garner higher pay for higher performance.

I know that these are only some of the good things happening in our classrooms right now. If you know of other successful programs, I encourage you to let the School Improvement Panel know about them so they can spread the word.

At the same time, the School Improvement Panel is taking note of any gaps, and welcomes possible solutions on how to fill them from citizens throughout North Carolina.

You might well ask: why is the Panel looking to the public? Why not consult only the so-called education experts?

The answer is that while outside experts can offer professional advice, the people who will likely provide the most innovative and creative solutions will be those with a personal stake in the fate of the system -- North Carolinians themselves.

That's only natural: as residents of the state, all of us have a vested and very personal interest in making certain our schools serve their students well.

We need to be active in making sure our public schools live up to our expectations. How else can we ensure that our future employees, voters, neighbors, community leaders and government officials are capable of leading us into the next century?

If we are successful in awakening a sense of pride and ownership in schools reform efforts will stand a better chance of success.

If we get more people in more communities involved in what goes on in local classrooms, these reforms will work.

And that's good news for all of us.

I want to thank you all again for your interest and participation, and I encourage you to take what you have heard here and invite your friends, neighbors, and co-workers to join us in our effort to revitalize public education in North Carolina.

Appendix E
TOTAL QUALITY EDUCATION

With the leadership and backing of the state's corporate citizens, the Quality Schools program was launched by the North Carolina Business Committee for Education in 1993 to bring quality management principles to bear on improving public education.

Quality management principles allow individual school systems to be more responsive to their own local needs and challenges and to use their increased authority and responsibility to improve their effectiveness and efficiency in preparing their students to lead successful lives.

The program was begun in October 1993 with partnerships each made up of a public school system, a university school of education and a local business or industry. The program has since been expanded to include 26 local school systems.

Information about the Quality Schools program is available through the North Carolina Business Committee for Education at 919/715-3535 or FAX 919/733-2120.

For information about the effect quality management practices are having at the level of individual schools, the following list gives the contact and phone number for the 26 participating school systems:

School System	Contact Person	Phone
Avery	Will Burgin	704/733-6006
Bertie	Patricia Dobbin	919/794-3173
*Bladen	Ann Elks	910/862-4136
Cabarrus	Jim Lunsford	704/786-6191
Caldwell	Len Morrison	704/728-8407
*Craven	Janet Furman	919/514-6300
Elkin City	Marcia Fincannon	910/835-3135
*Granville	Neill McDonald	919/693-4613
Haywood	Tom Posey	704/456-2400
Jackson	Frank Burrell	704/586-2311
*Johnston	E.D. Hall	919/934-6031
Jones	Carolyn Lane	919/448-2531
*Lincoln	Sherry Hoyle	704/732-2261
Mooresville	Bruce Boyles	704/664-5553
Nash-Rocky Mount	Lee Grier	919/459-5220
*New Hanover	John Morris	910/763-5431
Mount Airy City	Janice Sherrill	910/786-8355

Onslow	Freddie Canady	910/455-2211
Perquimans	Jake Boyce	919/426-5741
Robeson	Bruce Walters	910/738-4841
Rowan-Salisbury	Howard Hurt	704/636-7500
Washington	Fred Davenport	919/793-5171
Wayne	Charles Rivers	919/731-5100
Whiteville City	Lon Pierce	910/642-4116
Wilson	Larry Price	919/399-7700
Winston-Salem/Forsyth	Edna Crews	910/727-2816

*Initial Pilot System

Appendix F

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